PATRONAGE AND THE CHURCH

A STUDY IN THE SOCIAL STRUCTURE OF THE SECULAR CLERGY IN THE DIOCESE OF DURHAM (1311 - 1540)

A thesis presented for the degree of Ph.D. at the University of Edinburgh by Robert Donaldson, May, 1955.

VOLUME ONE

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My debt to many historians of the mediaeval church and of mediaeval England will be apparent from the footnotes and bibliography; but this thesis owes its existence in a particular measure to the assistance given to me by three scholars, whose aid I am privileged to acknowledge.

To my supervisor, Professor Denys Hay, I am indebted for patient advice, suggestions, criticisms and encouragement over a period of study more than usually protracted. Dr. J. Conway Davies, Reader in Palaeography and Diplomatic at the University of Durham and Archivist of the Dean and Chapter of Durham, placed me in his debt for more facilities and privileges than I had any right to expect, and during successive periods of study at the Cathedral Archives admitted me to all intents and purposes as a member of his own research group. The late Professor Hamilton Thompson, by generously making available to me his transcripts and calendars of the registers of Bishops Hatfield and Langley, enabled me to complete the bulk of my work on these vital documents in Edinburgh and thus materially reduced the greatest difficulty which attends upon spare-time research: that of obtaining opportunities for travel.

My thanks are also due to the Dean and Chapter of Durham for their grant of access to the magnificent collections in the Chapter Muniments and Library, which formed the basic materials for this study.

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TABLES IN CHAPTERS 4 and 5

(The few tables in chapters 1 and 3 have not been numbered.)

MAPS

(In pocket at the end of vol. 1.)

Map 1. Parish map of the diocese of Durham, c. 1535, showing patronage as at that date.

2. The northern palatinates, 1525.

3. Principal estates in northern England, 1525.

4. Principal roads and castles, 1525.

Map no. 1 has been adapted from the map of mediaeval Northumberland and Durham by R. Neville Hadcock in Archaeologia Aeliana, Ser. 4, vol. xvi; nos. 2, 3 and 4 from the map of northern England c. 1525 in R. R. Reid, The King's Council in the North. It should be noted that the shading in map 1 shows the person or corporation who actually presented to each benefice, which, in the case of appropriated churches, might be the bishop and not the appropriating house. (See below, pp. 189-191.) Mr. Neville Hadcock's map shows appropriations as such.

Key to numbers of parishes in Map 1.

Numbers followed by the symbol '+' represent benefices which were abolished or which lost their independence between the years 1311 and 1540.

Archdeaconry of Northumberland

1. Berwick
2. Norham
3. Branxton
4. Ford
5. Kirknewton
6. Wooler, with Fenton
7. Ilderton
8. Chatton
9. Chillingham
10. Bamborough
11. Alnham
12. Ingram
13. Eglingham
14. Whittingham
15. Edlingham
16. Ellingham
17. Embleton
18. Howick
19. Lesbury
19+ Alwinton, with Holystone
20. Rothbury
21. Felton
22. Shilbottle
23. Warkworth
24. Elsdon
25. Hartburn
26. Longhorsley
27. Mitford
28. Meldon
29. Bothal
30. Sheepwash
31. Morpeth
32. Woodhorn
33. Bedlington
34. Simonburn
35. Chollerton
36. Kirkwhelpington
37. Kirkharle, with Hawick
38. Bolam
39. Stamfordham
40. Whalton
41. Ponteland
42. Stannington
43. Upper Denton
44. Haltwhistle
45. Knaresdale
46. Kirkhaugh
47. Whitfield
48. Alston
49. Warden
50. Corbridge
51. Bywell St. Peter
52. Bywell St. Andrew, with Shotley
53. Ovingham
54. Heddon
55. Newburn
56. Newcastle, with Cramlington
57. Longbenton
58. Tynemouth

Archdeaconry of Durham

59. Ryton
60. Whickham
61. Gateshead
62. Boldon
63. Whitburn
63+ Hunstanworth
64. Edmundbyres
65. Muggleswick
66. Lanchester
67. Chester-le-Street
68. Washington
69. Houghton-le-Spring
70. Bishop Wearmouth
71. Seaham
72. Dalton-le-Dale
73. Stanhope
74. Wolsingham
75. Brancepeth
76. Durham, St. Oswald, with Witton Gilbert
77. Kimblesworth
77+ Durham, St. Nicholas
78. Durham, St. Mary in the North Bailey
79. Durham, St. Mary in the South Bailey
80. Pittington
81. Kelloe
82. Easington
83. Castle Eden
84. Hesleden
85. Middleton-in-Teesdale
86. Auckland, St. Andrew, with St. Helen
87. Cockfield
88. Merrington
89. Aycliffe
90. Bishop Middleham
91. Sedgefield
92. Stainton-le-Street
93. Grindon
94. Elwick
95. Hart
96. Gainford
97. Staindrop
98. Winston

99. Heighington
100. Coniscliffe
101. Darlington
102. Haughton-le-Skerne
103. Hurworth
104. Dinsdale
105. Sockburn
106. Bishopton
107. Longnewton
108. Middleton St. George
108+ Middleton St. George, sinecure rectory
109. Redmarshall
110. Elton
111. Egglescliffe
112. Norton
113. Billingham
114. Gretham
115. Stranton

Parishes and appendages not included in volume 2 nor in statistics in text

Archdeaconry of Northumberland

A. Carham
B. Islandshire
C. Kidland Grange
D. Alnwick
E. Brinkburn
F. Corsenside
G. Throckrington
H. Kirkheaton
I. Unknown
J. Horton
K. Lambley
L. Hexham
M. Slaley
N. Blanchland
O. Wallsend

Archdeaconry of Durham

P. Jarrow
Q. Ebchester
R. Monkwearmouth
S. Durham, St. Giles Kepier
T. Trimdon
U. Unknown
V. High Worsall

Index of parishes in Map 1.

On the map parishes are numbered roughly from north to south and from east to west.

11. Alnham
D. Alnwick
48. Alston
19+ Alwinton
86. Auckland, St. Andrew
86. Auckland, St. Helen
89. Aycliffe

10. Bamborough
33. Bedlington
1. Berwick
113. Billingham
90. Bishop Middleham
70. Bishop Wearmouth
106. Bishopton
N. Blanchland
38. Bolam
62. Boldon
29. Bothal
75. Brancepeth
3. Branxton
E. Brinkburn
52. Bywell St. Andrew
51. Bywell St. Peter

A. Carham
83. Castle Eden
8. Chatton
67. Chester-le-Street
9. Chillingham
35. Chollerton
87. Cockfield

100. Coniscliffe
50. Corbridge
F. Corsenside
56. Cramlington

72. Dalton-le-Dale
101. Darlington
104. Dinsdale
S. Durham, St. Giles Kepier
78. Durham, St. Mary in the North Bailey
79. Durham, St. Mary in the South Bailey
77+ Durham, St. Nicholas
76. Durham, St. Oswald

82. Easington
Q. Ebchester
15. Edlingham
64. Edmundbyres
111. Egglescliffe
13. Eglingham
16. Ellingham
24. Elsdon
110. Elton
94. Elwick
17. Embleton

21. Felton
6. Fenton
4. Ford

96. Gainford
61. Gateshead
114. Gretham
93. Grindon

44. Haltwhistle
95. Hart
25. Hartburn
102. Haughton-le-Skerne
37. Hawick
54. Heddon
99. Heighington
84. Hesleden
L. Hexham
V. High Worsall
19+ Holystone
J. Horton
69. Houghton-le-Spring
18. Howick
63+ Hunstanworth
103. Hurworth

7. Ilderton
12. Ingram
B. Islandshire

P. Jarrow

81. Kelloe
C. Kidland Grange
77. Kimblesworth
37. Kirkharle
46. Kirkhaugh
H. Kirkheaton
5. Kirknewton
36. Kirkwhelpington
45. Knaresdale

K. Lambley
66. Lanchester
19. Lesbury
57. Longbenton
26. Longhorsley
107. Longnewton

28. Meldon
88. Merrington
85. Middleton-in-Teesdale
108. Middleton St. George
108+ Middleton St. George, sinecure rectory
27. Mitford
R. Monkwearmouth
31. Morpeth
65. Muggleswick

55. Newburn
56. Newcastle
2. Norham
112. Norton

53. Ovingham

80. Pittington
41. Ponteland

109. Redmarshall
20. Rothbury
59. Ryton

71. Seaham
91. Sedgefield
30. Sheepwash
22. Shilbottle
52. Shotley
34. Simonburn
M. Slaley
105. Sockburn
97. Staindrop
92. Stainton-le-Street
39. Stamfordham
73. Stanhope
42. Stannington
115. Stranton

G. Thockrington
T. Trimdon
58. Tynemouth

43. Upper Denton

0. Wallsend
49. Warden
23. Warkworth
68. Washington
40. Whalton
60. Whickham
63. Whitburn
47. Whitfield
14. Whittingham
98. Winston
76. Witton Gilbert
74. Wolsingham
32. Woodhorn
6. Wooler

I. Unknown
U. Unknown

CONTRACTIONS

(Contractions of Latin words are rendered into English if the vernacular is not too distant from the Latin original.)

A.A.	Archaeologia Aeliana.
A.A.S.R. & P.	Associated Architectural Societies' Reports and Papers.
Ad.	Archdeacon.
Adry.	Archdeaconry.
Allan MSS.	Dean and Chapter Library. Manuscripts from the collection of Sir George Allan.
B.C.L.	Bachelor of Civil Law.
B.Can.L.	Bachelor of Canon Law.
B.I.H.R.	Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research.
B.M.V.	Blessed Virgin Mary.
C. and P.	Canon and prebendary or canonry and prebend.
Cart.	Dean and Chapter Archives. Cartularies of the Priory of Durham. (4 vols.)
Cart.Elem.Dunelm.	Dean and Chapter Archives. Cartulary of the Almoner of Durham Priory.
C.J.C.	Corpus Iuris Canonici.
C.M.H.	Cambridge Medieval History.
C.P.L.	Calendars of Papal Registers, Papal Letters.
C.P.P.	Calendars of Papal Registers, Papal Petitions.
C.P.R.	Calendar of Patent Rolls.
D.	Dean or deanery.
D.Can.L.	Doctor of Canon Law.
D.Civ.L.	Doctor of Civil Law.
Decr.Bac.	Bachelor of Decretals.
Decr.Doc.	Doctor of Decretals
D.K.R.	Reports of the Deputy Keeper of the Public Records.
D.N.B.	Dictionary of National Biography.
D.U.J.	Durham University Journal.
E.H.R.	English Historical Review.
F.D.	Fasti Dunelmenses (Surtees Soc. cxxxix).
Fraser:Bek.	The episcopate of Anthony Bek, bishop of Durham, 1283-1310. By C. M. Fraser. Durham Ph.D. Thesis, 1951.
Gasquet.	Collectanea Anglo-Premonstratensia. Ed. by F. A. Gasquet.

Gibson, Tynemouth.	The history of the monastery founded at Tynemouth. By W. S. Gibson
Hinde.	Introduction by Gladys Hinde to her transcript of Tunstall's Register. London University M.A. Thesis, 1933.
Hunter MSS.	Dean and Chapter Library. Manuscripts from the collection of Christopher Hunter.
Jur.Civ.Bac.	Bachelor of Civil Law.
Jur.Civ.Prof.	Professor of Civil Law.
Laing Charters.	The Laing Charters in the Library of the University of Edinburgh.
Le Neve.	Fasti Ecclesiae Anglicanae. Comp. by John Le Neve.
Lic.Leg.	Licentiate in Laws.
Loc.	Dean and Chapter Archives. Locelli.
L.P.	Calendar of Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic, Henry VIII.
Mag.Rep. Ad.D.	Dean and Chapter Archives. Magnum Repertorium, Archidiaconalia Dunelmensia.
Mag.Rep.Ad.N.	Dean and Chapter Archives. Magnum Repertorium. Archidiaconalia Northumbriensia.
Mag.Rep.Pont.	Dean and Chapter Archives. Magnum Repertorium. Pontificalia.
Mag.Rep.Spec.	Dean and Chapter Archives. Magnum Repertorium. Specialia.
Mand.ind.	Mandate to induct.
M.C.	Dean and Chapter Archives. Miscellaneous Charters.
N. & D. Deeds.	Northumberland and Durham Deeds from the Dodsworth MSS. in Bodley's Library. (Newcastle upon Tyne Records Ser. vii.)
N.C.H.	Northumberland County History Committee. History of Northumberland.
N.S.	New Series.
Occ.	Occurred.
P.C.R.	Dean and Chapter Archives. Register of the Prior and Convent of Durham. (Registra.) 5 vols.
P.R.O.	Public Record Office, London.
R.	Rector or rectory.
Randal, State of the Churches.	This is known to the writer only from a reference in Fasti Dunelmenses; it is probably, however, the same as the lists of incumbents in the Randall MSS.
Randall MSS.	Dean and Chapter Library. Manuscripts from the collection of Thomas Randall.

Rat.est.	Estate ratified; i.e. position confirmed.
Res.	Resigned.
R.H.	Register of Hatfield.
R.L.	Register of Langley.
Rot.Parl.	Rotuli Parliamentorum.
R.P.	Dean and Chapter Archives. Small register or letter-book of the Prior and Convent of Durham. (Registra Parva.) 3 vols.
R.P.D.	Registrum Palatinum Dunelmense.
R.T.	Register of Tunstall. (References are to MS. in Durham Chapter Library.)
Sharp MSS.	Dean and Chapter Library. Manuscripts from the collection of Sir Cuthbert Sharp.
s.n.	sub nomine.
S.P.P.	Sacrae Paginae Professor.
S.S.	Surtees Society. (S.S. cxix: Richard d'Aungerville of Bury; fragments of his register and other documents; S.S. cxlvii: Register of Bishop Fox.)
S.T.B.	Sacrae Theologiae Baccalarius.
S.T.M.	Sacrae Theologiae Magister.
S.T.P.	Sacrae Theologiae Professor.
Surtees.	The history and antiquities of the County Palatine of Durham. By R. S. Surtees.
Theol.Lic.	Licentiate in Theology.
T.R.H.S.	Transactions of the Royal Historical Society.
U.I.B.	Utriusque Iuris Baccalarius.
V.	Vicar or vicarage.
V.C.H.	Victoria History of the Counties of England.
v.p.m. (of a benefice).	vacant by the death (of the incumbent).
v.p.r. (of a benefice).	vacant by the resignation (of the incumbent).

INTRODUCTION

To some extent the subject of this thesis was suggested by remarks made by Professor Geoffrey Barraclough in his book, Papal provisions (Oxford, 1935). Working mainly from conclusions based upon evidence for certain Rhenish and Netherlands dioceses, Mr. Barraclough showed that the appointment of clerks to benefices in these areas during the later middle ages was probably influenced more by the pressure of local aristocratic families than by the provisions policy of the papal curia. His book was both a survey and interpretation of the availablematerial and a plea for further local investigations into the nature of the beneficed clergy in the later middle ages; into their social and occupational background and the systems of patronage which obtained for them their benefices. For English dioceses, as for those in other parts of Western Europe, he would have us ask how far were the ancient Germanic conceptions of founders' rights in the provision for the cure of souls in their churches (the "Eigenkirchenwesen") valid during the later middle ages, and how far had they been replaced by the Romanistic view of church government exemplified by the canon law and by the administrative development of the church which culminated in papal claims of ultimate control over all clerical appointments. "What proportion of these (papal) provisions took effect? To what class did the providees belong? ... Do certain family connexions maintain a position of dominance, notwithstanding papal intervention? What proportion of foreigners are found in possession /

possession of beneficia curata? ... Before these and other parallel questions can be answered a long series of detailed, independent studies of individual churches and smaller ecclesiastical districts ... will be necessary ..."[1]

While it is true that many books touch on various aspects of the problem;[2] modern scholarship has tended to concentrate upon the administrative and constitutional aspects of the mediaeval English /

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[1] Barraclough, Papal provisions, pp. 47-48.

[2] Notably Professor Hamilton Thompson's Ford Lectures on The English clergy in the later middle ages, his articles, Pluralism in the medieval church in the Associated Architectural Societies' Reports and Papers, vols. xxxiii-xxxvi, and his article on William Beverley, archdeacon of Northumberland in Medieval studies presented to Rose Graham. Miss Kathleen Edwards's recent work on The English secular cathedrals in the middle ages, Miss Kathleen Wood-Legh's Studies in church life in England under Edward III and her articles, The appropriation of parish churches during the reign of Edward III and Some aspects of the history of the chantries during the reign of Edward III in the Cambridge Historical Journal, vols. iii-iv, all contain some relevant material, as does Dr. R. A. R. Hartridge's A history of vicarages in the middle ages, and the Misses M. Gibbs' and J. Lang's Bishops and reform.

Unfortunately W. A. Pantin's Birkbeck Lectures, The English church in the fourteenth century, were published after the bulk of the thesis was in typescript and could not be used to any extent except in chapters 5 and 6. Part 1 of this book contains the most direct treatment of the subjects of patronage and the social structure of the English clergy.

English church rather than upon the individual clergymen, and few attempts have been made to discuss Professor Barraclough's questions on the basis of statistical evidence from individual dioceses or other local areas.[1] The present thesis is such an attempt, based upon the evidence obtainable for the churches and beneficed clergy of the diocese of Durham. This evidence consists chiefly of the records preserved in the archives of the Dean and Chapter of Durham, notably the registers and files of the mediaeval Benedictine priory and convent which provide very full information on the many churches appropriated to the cathedral church. To some extent these records compensate for the lack of a complete set of mediaeval episcopal registers; only six of these have survived: Kellawe's (1311-1316), parts of Bury's (1333-1345), Hatfield's (1345-1381), Langley's (1406-1437), Fox's (imperfect, 1494-1501) and Tunstall's (1529-1559).

The great temporal power which the bishops enjoyed as lords palatine of county Durham made them unique among English prelates and has prompted comparison with the archbishops of Cologne in the 10th and 11th centuries.[2] It gives a peculiar interest to the bishopric itself and had considerable importance, as we shall see, in determining the influences brought to bear in making appointments to /

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[1] But see J. T. Driver, The papacy and the diocese of Hereford, 1307-1377. (Church Quarterly Review, cxlv, 1947, pp. 31-47.)

[2] N. Denholm-Young, Richard de Bury (1287-1345) (T.R.H.S. Ser. 4, xx), p. 154.

to its benefices. But it has on the other hand tended to distract the attention of some of the earlier local historians from the ecclesiastical history of the area and it forms the subject of the most important modern historical work on Durham, G. T. Lapsley's The county palatine of Durham.

There is no lack of general histories of Durham and Northumberland, and some of the older ones are a part of our national historical heritage;[1] while among their modern successors the Northumberland County History Committee's History of Northumberland notably maintains their high standard.[2] Considerable use has been made of all these works in the preparation of this thesis.

Even with their help, however, the social structure of the Durham clergy in the later middle ages proved a very large subject, and it is not claimed that what follows has done more than cover two main aspects of it. A third aspect, the consideration of the regular clergy, has in general been omitted, so that no detailed analysis of the social background of the monks and canons regular has been attempted. As incumbents of vicarages both Premonstratensian and Augustinian canons will be dealt with at some length /

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[1] E.g. Robert Surtees's The history and antiquities of the county palatine of Durham, William Hutchinson's The history and antiquities of the county palatine of Durham, James Raine's The history and antiquities of North Durham, and Hodgson's and Hinde's A history of Northumberland.

[2] It is extremely regrettable that the Victoria County History of Durham, with only three volumes published, remains in an incomplete state.

length; while monastic houses figure prominently in their corporate capacity as the patrons of parish churches. But it has proved impracticable to combine a close study of the regular clergy as such with that of the beneficed seculars and their patrons; such a study might well, in fact, make a thesis in itself. Parenthetically, it might be remarked that there exists in the archives of the Dean and Chapter of Durham a considerable amount of material for a work on the monks of Durham Cathedral Priory and its cells, particularly in the 15th century.

The secular clergy beneficed in the diocese of Durham and the patrons who procured their appointments: these, then, are the two groups with which we shall be primarily concerned. For it is at the point at which the members of these groups come into the closest contact with each other, the moment when the place-hunting clerk finds a patron to put him forward for preferment, that the records are most informative about the social, educational and professional background of the one party and the views, policies and influence of the other.

Much mud has been thrown at the beneficed clergy of the two centuries preceding the Henrician Reformation; at their morals, their education, their conscientiousness or lack of it in the performance of their duties, as well as at their theology. More recently, a good deal of whitewash has followed in attempts to cover or to remove it. More recently still the apostles of the cult of averages have been at pains to prove that what had hitherto been /

been viewed as black or as white was really an indeterminate grey; which was probably true and is at all events a safe interpretation. The present thesis has been written in the belief that the only way to arrive at even such remotely valid conclusions about the standard of the later mediaeval clergy as are possible at the range of half a millenium is to study in detail the social background, patronage and conduct of a series of selected groups of clerks, covering eventually if it is feasible the entire beneficed clergy of England, applying where appropriate statistical methods, and not relying upon the well-chosen example, whatsoever standards of fairness are applied to its selection. This is not to deny the limits of, and the considerable risks of distortion which lie in, the use of statistics, especially when the evidence upon which they must be based is itself incompletely preserved. Nevertheless they represent the only possible way of taking into consideration information about all of the thousands of clerks who must be considered. While the statistical approach tends to focus attention upon minutiae to the exclusion of a great deal of the generalisation which is, after all, the main point of historical study, it is arguable that this exclusion is not entirely undesirable, at any rate until all of the available data has been assembled. The aim of this thesis is to assemble some of this data for one diocese in the hope that, if and when similar work has been done for the other bishoprics of England, it will be possible to give a clearer picture than has so far been presented of what "Ecclesia Anglicana" was /

was like in the two centuries before she substituted a monarch for a pope as her earthly superior.

The mediaeval diocese of Durham consisted of the counties of Durham and Northumberland, exclusive of the liberty of Hexham, which was a jurisdictional "peculiar" or "franchise" of the archbishop of York, but including the parishes of Alston and Upper Denton in the county of Cumberland and small areas in Yorkshire. For statistical purposes benefices in Yorkshire - mainly in the franchises of Howden and Allerton which belonged to the church of Durham - have been omitted, as have those Lincoln and Nottinghamshire churches which were in the gift of the priory of Durham. The franchise of Coldinghamshire in Scotland has also been ignored, although the vicarage of Berwick, the rectory of which was appropriated to Durham priory's cell of Benedictine monks at Coldingham, has been included.[1] Some hundred and twenty benefices with cure of souls have been considered, together with the prebends of five collegiate churches.[2] Between the years 1311 and 1540 the patronage of these benefices was in or passed through the hands of about twenty five ecclesiastical patrons including the bishops of Durham and /

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[1] See map 1; R. Neville Hadcock, A map of mediaeval Northumberland and Durham (A.A. Ser. 4, xvi, 1939, pp. 148-218); H. Barlow, Durham jurisdictional peculiars, passim.

[2] The prebends of the collegiate church of Staindrop, founded in 1408, have not been included, since this church was rather of the nature of a hospital for pensioned-off members of the earl of Westmorland's household. (Hamilton Thompson, The collegiate churches of the bishoprick of Durham (D.U.J. xxxvi, no. 2) p. 40.)

and Carlisle and over thirty lay patrons including the king. They were served by about two thousand clergymen.[1]

The period to be covered is 1311-1540, the latter date determined by the dissolution of the greater monasteries, the former by the commencing point of the first of the series of Durham bishops' registers. Both dates were chosen primarily from motives of convenience; 1311 because the episcopal registers form our main source of information about patronage and appointments to benefices; 1540 because the disappearance of the monastic patrons resulted in considerable changes in the mediaeval disposal of patronage. Other features of northern English history may, however, be adduced to justify this choice of period. In 1311, for example, the "epic" phase of the Anglo-Scottish war had just three years to run before its culmination at Bannockburn; thereafter it was to have a character less spectacular if none the less destructive. Battles, on the whole, gave way to raids, with exceptions such as Halidon Hill and Neville's Cross to prove the rule. During Kellawe's episcopate, the relations between the bishop of Durham and his monastic chapter settled down to a period of comparative calm after the sensations of the Bek regime. By the end of the 13th century the /

[1] Evidence concerning the many chaplains and chantry priests in the diocese of Durham is too scanty to enable us to consider them in statistical detail. Mention of them is made, however, at several points in the thesis. See especially below, pp. 112-113, for the nature of the appointments, and pp. 471-473 for the clerks who filled them. Mr. Neville Hadcock lists 85 chapels and 1 chantry in the archdeaconry of Durham and 134 chapels and 4 chantries in that of Northumberland. (Op.cit., passim.)

the process of alienating advowsons to religious houses, which was a characteristic of the earlier church history of Durham, had passed its zenith, and the structure of patronage remained thereafter fairly stable until the Reformation. At the close of our period, in the fifteen thirties, the political and constitutional features of the north of England were losing their mediaeval aspect as Henry VIII's government rooted out the privileges of sanctuary and set up the Council of the North in its final form, and with these achievements effected the beginning of the long decline in the powers of the bishop of Durham's palatinate jurisdiction which lasted until the Act of 21 June 1836 finally vested the franchise in the crown.[1]

Two main subjects will be dealt with. The first, that of patronage and influence, will involve principally the examination of the various patrons, lay and ecclesiastical, with a view to ascertaining the types of benefices to which they presented and the types of clergymen whom they tended to present. But it will also be necessary to attempt the more difficult task of finding out how far various persons and groups tried to influence the legitimate patrons in order to secure the appointment of their own clerical protégés. The second subject is the nature and quality of the beneficed clerks themselves. In studying it, what Professor /

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[1] Stat. 6 and 7 William IV, cap. 19; Lapsley, op.cit., p. 204; V.C.H. Durham, ii, p. 173. Two of the local courts survived the Act: the Court of Pleas, which was, however, abolished in 1873, and the Court of Chancery, still in existence.

fessor Neale has called "the biographical approach to history" will be used: this is to say that, from short biographical notes on as many clerks as it has been possible to identify, we shall try to extract evidence which, when tabulated, should lead to some valid conclusions on how benefices were disposed of and on the personal, educational, social and professional standards required by the candidates for incumbencies. We shall try to see how such criteria varied from benefice to benefice, district to district, and patron to patron. Some of this tabulation will cover the whole period; some selected spans of time within it, the results for which may be compared with each other. For, although the diocesan structure remained fairly constant during the 14th, 15th and early 16th centuries, there occurred some important changes which require attention.

The information on which such a "biographical approach" may be based must obviously take the form of a "fasti", and it is therefore fortunate that the Surtees Society has already published such a "fasti" for the mediaeval diocese of Durham.[1] But while this very useful compilation forms one of the bases of the present study, it was soon apparent that it suffered from some inaccuracies and omissions and that its arrangement was not the most convenient for our purposes. The bulk of its biographical information is arranged in an alphabetical list of clerks which forms the main portion /

[1] Fasti Dunelmenses, edited by D. S. Boutflower (S.S. cxxxix), to be cited hereafter as F.D.

portion of the book, and the chronological list of incumbents under each benefice contains merely names and dates of occurrence. Volume 2 of this thesis set out to be a supplement to this published fasti for the years 1311 to 1540, but grew somewhat inflated in the process of compilation. It consists of notes on members of the clergy beneficed in the diocese of Durham during our period arranged in chronological order under each benefice, and not, as in the Surtees Society volume, in an alphabetical list of clerks. But it is more than a mere rearrangement of this volume, for it contains a good deal of additional data derived mainly from manuscripts in the archives of the Dean and Chapter of Durham and from the registers of Bishops Hatfield, Langley and Tunstall. Moreover, it sets out details about the valuations and patrons of the benefices themselves; while, under each incumbent concerning whom such information is available, it lists such items as academic degrees, ecclesiastical orders and dignities, civil and legal offices, family connections and patrons, all of which are particularly relevant to this study. Indeed, it would scarcely be an exaggeration to say that much of the narrative in volume 1 is little more than a commentary upon volume 2.

While the nature of the subject demands a method of presentation analagous, in a crude way, to that of the modern social survey; this is not intended to be "history with the politics left out." The omission of politics would hardly be possible, even if it were desirable. For example, several 14th century appropriations of churches /

churches to monasteries were a direct result of monastic impoverishment caused by the wars with the Scots, and the appropriation of a church might alter the class of clergyman who served its cure and who would no longer be an independent rector, but a vicar presented by the monastery.

The importance of politics to the church in a diocese in which the greatest secular power was in the hands of the bishop himself must indeed be fairly apparent; but particular illustrations of this importance require a more detailed consideration than is possible in an introductory note. Therefore the first chapters will attempt to relate the history of the diocese of Durham to the international, national and local politics of church and state during the later middle ages.

C H A P T E R O N E

THE LAND AND THE PEOPLE

Part 1. Geography and economics.

The place-hunting clerk of the 14th or 15th century, when he petitioned the pope or the king or a local lay or ecclesiastical patron for a benefice in the diocese of Durham, had probably little idea of what, in terms of geography and human society, that benefice might look like - assuming, that is, that he was not of local stock. If he were socially and politically well-informed - and clergymen seeking benefices had to be - he would be well aware of the powers of the bishop, of the machinery of diocesan administration, which was similar to that in use in most of Latin Christendom, of the patrons and values of the benefices and of which were vacant, of the social and political influence of the local aristocracy and of its relations with the royal and ecclesiastical authorities. He might even have some idea of how effective - or ineffective - had been the latest truce made with the Scots, and thus of the risk he ran of having his rectory or vicarage house burned down about his ears, his glebe devastated and his stock of animals driven off by raiders. What is less likely is that he knew much about the climate, physical appearance and natural resources of his prospective parish, and of the lives and characters of his parishioners. If, as is not unlikely, he was petitioning for a rectory or a canonry with the intention of being non-resident, he probably cared as little as he knew about these /

these things. Nevertheless, they did much to determine the value of the benefices, and in this way would influence his choice; while, if he did propose to reside, they would be of the highest practical importance to him in due course. Thus they may be held to be the first of the factors which determined the type of clergyman to be found in charge of Durham parishes, and therefore helped to evolve the social structure of the church. And thus they deserve first place in this discussion.

Rumours and reports about the physical conditions in the north of England cannot have been very encouraging to the prospective candidate for preferment. Although the district did not lie within those "great unknowns" which the mediaeval cartographer imaginatively peopled with demons, dragons, giants, and so forth, it was unkindly treated by the chroniclers and travellers. Froissart painted a dismal picture of the trials and troubles of Edward III's army, bogged down in the sodden bracken of the border hills during the summer campaign of 1327;[1] and a century later the disgruntled Aeneas Sylvius described the land north of Newcastle as "rude, uncultivated, and unvisited by the winter sun."[2]

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[1] Chroniques de J. Froissart. Publ. pour la Société de l'Histoire de France. Par S. Luce. Tom. 1, Paris, 1869, p. 60, and cf. pp. 50-72.

[2] The Commentaries of Pius II (Aeneas Sylvius Piccolomini), tr. Gragg. (Smith College Studies in History, vol. 22, nos. 1-2, Northampton, Massachusetts, 1936-37), p. 20.

Outside of the summer season, the country probably looked and was wet; a good deal of marsh land still persisted between the numerous rivers. But rainfall in the bishopric was by no means as great as it was to the west of the Pennines, and the predominant feature of the climate was, and still is, cold rather than humidity.[1]

Bounded in the south by the Tees and the North York Moors, in the west by the high ranges of the Pennines, and in the north-west by the Cheviots, the bishopric of Durham formed a distinct geographical unit, much influenced by the three corridors which penetrated its rim. These were, to the north the coastal gap between the Cheviots and the North Sea, to the west the valley of the River Tyne leading to the lowlands around the Solway, and to the south the "Northallerton Gate" between the Central Pennines and the North York Moors. As Fawcett points out,[2] the fact that the southern gap was much wider and less obstructed than either of the others and that it led to an area far richer than Lothian or Cumbria, probably did much to ensure that the counties of Northumberland /

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[1] The average modern rainfall is 25 - 30 inches per annum in the east and 30 - 40 inches in the western hills. (Great Britain; essays in regional geography, ed. Ogilvie, 2nd ed., repr. Cambridge, 1953, pp. 13-15.) Since physical geography and climatic conditions have changed but little during the past five hundred years, the section by C. B. Fawcett on North-East England in this book is valid for our period on these matters. Some useful hints on mediaeval climate and geography in County Durham are given in the sections, Social and Economic History and Industries in V.C.H. Durham, ii, pp. 175-356 passim.

[2] Great Britain; essays in regional geography, p. 333.

Northumberland and Durham would be "North-East England rather than South-East Scotland."

The routes of the main mediaeval roads, which had also been, to all intents and purposes, those of the Romans, were dictated by these gaps, and thus the most important was the north-south highway, which, crossing the Tees south of Darlington, ran north via Durham, Newcastle and Alnwick to the border town of Berwick.[1] Significantly enough, it was along this route that the main traffic, military, mercantile and diplomatic, passed during our period: the main east-west route, which ran just south of Hadrian's Wall from Newcastle via the Tyne Gap and Hexham to Carlisle, was to a very large extent the route of Scottish raiders, as was its "branch line" from Hexham by the North Tyne and Redesdale to Jedburgh and Roxburgh. The main Scottish invasions, however, passed down the east coast route.[2]

It may be said, then, that the bishopric lay along a north-south axis, which was determined by the contours of the country. The rivers, with the exception of the Wear below Bishop Auckland, the North Tyne, the Rede and the Till, transversed this axis, and were bridged or forded, not followed, by the main road. As always in the days before steam power, civilisation and cultivation tended /

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[1] See map 4. V.C.H. Durham, ii, pp. 175-6, gives a detailed description of what is known of the system of Roman roads in County Durham.

[2] Ibid., p. 148.

tended to cluster on their banks; but in Durham diocese the essential divisions in climate, territory and to some extent human occupation lay between the uplands in the west and the lowlands in the east.

The physical features of the country were naturally of importance in determining its agricultural and industrial development. Extensive farming was carried out in the eastern lowlands, and the area under cultivation must have extended westwards into the Pennine and Cheviot foothills along the river valleys.[1] The chief crops seem to have been wheat, barley, oats and peas; wheat and barley having by far the greatest market value.[2]

Sheep rearing, so extensive in the great Cistercian wool areas of Yorkshire to the south, was an important branch of farming in the bishopric: in the west of the palatinate whole districts /

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[1] Compare the evidence of farming activities at Stanhope in the survey of episcopal vills compiled under Bishop Hatfield and completed in 1382. (Bishop Hatfield's Survey (S.S. xxii) pp. 68-73.) In the 18th century - lack of data makes it impossible to be certain for earlier periods - it seems that farming methods did not vary a great deal between the farms in the east and west of the bishopric: the same type of swing plough was in use in all parts of Northumberland. (J. Bailey and G. Culley: General view of the agriculture of ... Northumberland, Newcastle, 1797, p. 38.)

[2] V.C.H. Durham, ii, pp. 196-7. In 1373 at Bellasis in Billingham-shire wheat was valued at 6/8 to 8/- an acre, barley at 10/- to 15/-, oats, peas and hay at 4/-. A Billingham serf with 20 acres under the plough devoted 5 to wheat, 5 to barley and the remaining 10 to peas and oats. Sowing was normally done in winter, but occasionally in spring.

districts were devoted to pasture by the bishop and the priory of Durham.[1] It is unlikely, of course, that all of the high and the very wet and heathy land of west Durham and south-west Northumberland could be used to a large extent for pasture. Even with the considerable improvements in scientific sheep rearing of the late 18th century, it was "an universal practice, among the most experienced sheep farmers, to depasture the heathy districts with old sheep, (gimmers and wethers), but they never attempt to keep a breeding stock upon them."[2] At this period two hardy breeds of sheep, the Cheviot and the heath, were being pastured in Northumberland, usually, it seems, the Cheviots in the north and the heath in the south-west. The wool of neither, however, was of the highest quality, and the more valuable long-wool sheep had to be pastured in the lowlands.[3] It is reasonable to suppose that in the middle ages also the more valuable stock was confined to the lowlands and the valleys: heath land was probably an even greater obstacle in the 14th and 15th centuries than in the more advanced 18th.

If the largest sheep runs were in the hands of the church of Durham, there is evidence that several lay landowners - and not only /

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1 Ibid., p. 194.
2 Bailey and Culley, op.cit., pp. 126-7.
3 Ibid., pp. 126-132.

only those in the hill areas - were turning their lands by the 14th century over to pasture. The bursar of Durham cathedral, in recording the decrease in the receipts from his churches over the period 1293 to 1420, notes that, of four reasons for the lower receipts, "tertia, et præcipua, (is) propter terras in parochiis dictarum ecclesiarum quondam cultas, ubi Prior et Conventus receperunt decimas garbarum, et post per dominos earundem positas ad pasturas."[1] The other three reasons were the loss of the fruits of churches in Scotland, the Scottish border wars and the plagues. While the wars no doubt accounted for the staggering drop in receipts from Norhamshire, large decreases in the value of certain parishes in county Durham may be at least partly explained by the loss of garbal[2] tithes following on conversion to pasture. Thus some conversion to pasture probably proceeded in lowland areas of the bishopric during our period. Both ecclesiastical and temporal landholders, faced with the necessity of keeping abreast of a growing mercantile economy, seem to have decided that wool was the most lucrative agricultural product which Durham could market - even although the comparatively poor quality of both the wool and the hides of the far north of England made /

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[1] Script. Tres (S.S. ix) App. no. ccxii. Two centuries later, in the period of a large-scale inclosing movement in Durham, rectors were obtaining "commutation of tithes or special advantages because they fear a 'decay of tithes;'" the point was that inclosure was frequently followed by the conversion of over-cultivated arable land to pasture. (E. M. Leonard: The inclosure of common fields in the 17th century (T.R.H.S., N.S., xix, 1905) p. 117.)

[2] That is the "greater tithes" or tithes on grain. (Cf. J. Dowden, The medieval church in Scotland, Glasgow, 1910, p. 65.)

made it difficult for the merchants of Newcastle (which in 1464 became a staple port for wool produced north of Yorkshire[1]) to dispose of them.[2]

While the sheep runs of the bishopric thus represented the only serious attempt at agricultural production for an outside market during our period, their formation did not lead at this time to any large-scale inclosing movement.[3] In the western hills, of course, inclosure was hardly necessary, since no one had any prior interest in cultivating the hill-sides. In the lowlands, inclosure for the purposes of large-scale arable farming by the greater landowners was hindered by the many disadvantages inherent in the position of the bishopric far from a central market, in the poverty of much of its soil, and in the hazards of war and outlawry. If the Scots came and burned your crops, all you could do was go and burn some of theirs in retaliation: you still suffered a loss. If, on the other hand, they drove off your flocks, you could at least make an attempt to recover them, or failing that, to steal new ones from over the border - or even from the next valley. The greatest dangers of permanent loss in pasture farming came from the weather and the highland wolves, which /

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1 Brand: History of Newcastle, ii, p. 224. Newcastle's position as a staple port was confirmed in 1475. (Ibid.)

2 R. R. Reid: The King's Council in the North, pp. 4-5, quoting Rot.Parl. iv, pp. 360, 379.

3 Some examples of early inclosures from the 14th century are given in V.C.H. Durham, ii, p. 238.

which persisted right on into the 17th century.[1] Thus what attempt there was at direct profit-making from agriculture was usually concentrated on sheep rearing. And since there was no need to inclose the largest sheep runs in the hills, the bishopric was spared the problems of inclosure until the 17th century. Moreover, the early importance of pasture north of the Tees meant that inclosure - which naturally caused greater agricultural and social upheaval in direct proportion to the importance of arable farming in the district concerned - represented less of a revolution in Durham than it did in the Midland areas of intensive cultivation and a dense population of agricultural labourers many of whom were faced with unemployment as a result of the new emphasis on pastoral farming and the consolidation of farms. The Durham peasants were on the whole less vulnerable than those further south since much of their attention was already concentrated on pasture.[2]

In the 14th, 15th and 16th centuries arable farming was for the most part the care of tenants of modest holdings. While the "liberi tenentes" of Hatfield's Survey possessed holdings ranging normally from 20 to 100 acres; the "terrae bondorum" were rarely over /

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[1] Ibid., p. 175.

[2] Most of the above paragraph is based on Leonard, op.cit, passim, but especially pp. 103-4, 111-114.

over 30 acres and usually less than 6.[1] The tendency to small holding was intensified by the persistence of "gavelkind tenure", a survival of the custom before inheritance by primogeniture became usual, which involved the subdivision of a peasant's tenements between his sons. Peasant poverty which to some extent resulted from the maintenance of this custom may have been a cause of much of the lawlessness in the north.[2] It would also provide a pool of recruits for the military retinues which were necessary for the security of the local upper-class families. These families required fighting men and money to pay them rather than efficiently produced agricultural surpluses, for which, in fact, there was little local demand among the very small urban population.[3] Thus there was not much interest in advanced demesne farming carried out with hired labour, the greater landowners preferring to obtain quick financial returns by letting out the demesne. There is evidence of this for as early a period as the 12th century in the survey of episcopal vills known as Boldon Book /

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[1] Even in the 18th century the large farms were normally only to be found in the north of Northumberland. In the wards of Glendale and Bamborough they were usually valued at between £500 and £1,500 a year, and some at £2,000 - £4,000; but elsewhere the value of a farm was between £50 and £300 a year. (Bailey and Culley, op.cit., p. 29.)

[2] On this question see Reid, op.cit., p. 6.

[3] The population of Newcastle, for instance, has been estimated at 3,970 in 1377, about a seventh of the population of county Northumberland, and that of Durham city at about 2,000, about a tenth of the population of county Durham. (Cf. J. C. Russell: British medieval population, pp. 144-5.)

Book,[1] and when both labourers and tenants became hard to find after the plagues of the 14th century, both the bishop and the priory of Durham, by far the greatest landowners in the bishopric, preferred to lower rents and extend the system of leasing, in order to attract peasants as tenants. They were unsuccessful in their attempts to enforce the old labour services, and lacked the incentive of ready markets to inclose the better land and farm it with hired labour on their own account.[2] The bishop and the priory remained as landlords; their demesne tended to be merged with non-demesne land and divided into holdings which were taken up as leases, usually for life in the bishop's vills and for terms of years in those of the prior and convent.[3] The development - or otherwise - of agriculture was essentially in the hands of the small-holders, and it is worth noting that among them, by virtue of their glebe holdings and the extra land which their lords might let to them,[4] were the parish priests, the chaplains, vicars and resident rectors.

Industrial development, no less than agricultural, was largely /

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1 V.C.H. Durham, ii, p. 203. For examples of fairly widespread letting out of the demesne in 15th century Northumberland see Percy Bailiff's Rolls (S.S. cxxxiv.) pp. 2, 26, 35, 37, 45, etc. According to J. E. A. Jolliffe, Northumbrian Institutions (E.H.R. xli) pp. 5-9, the strong persistence of pre-Norman forms of tenure in the north of England had all along precluded the extensive development of demesne cultivation based on tenants' services.

2 The above is mainly based upon V.C.H., Durham, ii, pp. 209-229.

3 Ibid., 226.

4 See, for example, Durham Halmote Rolls (S.S. lxxxii), p. 129.

largely dependent upon geographical and geological conditions. Carboniferous rock, which was predominant especially in the north and west,[1] the relic of enormous areas of forest country, made coal one of the most obvious of the bishopric's natural resources even at a very early period. Mining in the bishopric seems to have begun in Northumberland and coal was being traded - it seems likely - to London by the 13th century.[2] By 1356, however, the bishops of Durham had definitely established their own mines in the palatinate at Whickham, where Hatfield leased five mines for twelve years to Sir Thomas Gray, knight, and John Pulhore, rector of Whickham, at a yearly rent of 500 marks.[3] In the 15th century the Percies were also farming out the coal mines on their lands in Northumberland,[4] and we cannot doubt that these mines were a profitable concern for the landowners of the bishopric, since there was a ready market, not easily glutted, in the south of the kingdom.[5] The lease of the Whickham mines, taken /

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1 Great Britain; essays in regional geography, ed. Ogilvie, p. 334.

2 V.C.H., Durham, ii, p. 321. The earliest reference to the use of coal in England which has been traced by Nef was at Blyth in Northumberland in 1236. (J. U. Nef: The rise of the British coal industry, i, Lond. 1932, p. 7, note 1, quoting R. L. Galloway: Annals of coal mining and the coal trade, Lond., 1898, p. 21.)

3 V.C.H., Durham, ii, p. 322, quoting P.R.O. Durham Cursitors Records, no. 30, m. 11d.

4 Percy Bailiff's Rolls (S.S. cxxxiv) pp. 3, 31, etc.

5 For a rough indication of the location of coal, iron, lead and silver mines in the bishopric see the map on p. 257 of H. C. Darby, ed.: An historical geography of England before A.D. 1800, Cambridge, 1936.

taken by the rector, is some indication of how at least one parochial clergyman participated in the mining industry.

A ready local supply of charcoal facilitated early attempts at the development of an iron industry when this ore was mined, at first, it appears, in the bishop's forest of Weardale.[1] Although iron - as, indeed, all minerals in the county palatine - belonged to the lord bishop, he normally exploited his resources of it by means of farming out the mines; the family of Eure seems to have been particularly active as a lessee of some of the iron mines and forges of Weardale, and in the fourteen thirties Sir William Eure was paying the bishop £112:13:4 a year for them.[2] There was a good deal of competition from the finer Spanish iron products, however, even in the local market. As early as 1361, for example, the bursar of Durham priory bought Spanish iron as well as the local metal - and paid fifty per cent more for it.[3] It may have been at least partly a result of this competition that Durham's iron production, although considerable, remained of less importance than that of coal.[4]

Apart from coal and iron, lead was the chief mineral mined in /

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1 V.C.H., Durham, ii, p. 353.

2 G. T. Lapsley: The account roll of a 15th century ironmaster (E.H.R. xiv) p. 516.

3 V.C.H., Durham, ii, p. 355.

4 In 1473, for instance, the "conyng iryns" for the bishop's mint had to be supplied from York. (Ibid., p. 280, quoting P.R.O. Durham Cursitors Records, no. 49, m. 6.)

in the bishopric. Like the iron, it was mined and smelted mainly in Weardale, by local workers paid by landowners who had leased the mines from their overlord, the bishop.[1] Nevertheless, in the 15th century the bishop seems to have worked a number of the mines on his own account - as he had attempted, probably unsuccessfully, to do with the iron mines[2] - and in 1523-4 he bought 330 loads of ore from his tenant-miners, to sell at least half the lead produced from them to one Gilbert Middleton, merchant of Newcastle.[3] A century earlier there is evidence for the transport of lead to the Tyne near Whickham, probably for export.[4]

Thus the coal, iron and lead industries provided, as agriculture itself did not to any large extent, a source of trade and profit for certain of the greater landowners in the bishopric - and especially for the bishop. Two other important industries of our period, fishing and the manufacture of salt, were of necessity confined to coastal areas.[5] A considerable herring industry seems to /

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1 Ibid., p. 349.

2 Lapsley, op.cit., p. 509.

3 V.C.H., Durham, ii, p. 351.

4 Ibid., p. 350.

5 There seems to have been a certain amount of salt in the River Wear, however. It attracted sufficient attention at the city of Durham itself to be mentioned by Polydore Vergil. (Polydore Vergil's English history from an early translation. Ed. Ellis. Vol. 1 (Camden Soc. xxxvi, 1846), p. 215.)

to have been based on Hartlepool by the 14th century;[1] while the priory of Durham had a considerable interest in the salt trade, by reason of its possession of lands between Jarrow and South Shields, where the trade tended to concentrate in the 16th century, after earlier salt-cotes - at Gretham, for example - had been washed away by the tides. In this period the priory seems to have collected all the salt-pans and the trade into its own hands.[2]

In many ways, therefore, the geography of the bishopric and its natural resources exercised a direct and obvious influence on the clergy, as represented by the parson farming his glebe, the monastery working its salt-pans, or the bishop exploiting his mineral possessions. More indirectly, insofar as geographical facts determined the habitat and habits of the lay population, they affected the distribution and duties of the secular clergy, whose ultimate function was to serve the laity in spiritual matters.

Part 2. Population.[3]

Most of the agricultural and industrial activity of the bishopric was concentrated in the eastern plain and in the southern valleys of the Wear and the Tees, which were, in consequence, the most /

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1 Sharp: History of Hartlepool, p. 170.

2 V.C.H. Durham, ii, pp. 294-5, quoting Compoti Domus de Jarow, 1500. (S.S. xxix.)

3 I am indebted to Professor Richard Titmuss of the London School of Economics and Political Science for valuable criticisms during the preparation of this section.

most populous areas. A fairly useful division between "populous" and "sparsely populated" land may be made, as is suggested by Mr. Hughes, along the 600 feet contour line,[1] which, with many zig-zags, divides the diocese from north to south from - very roughly - Carham on the Tweed to Gainford on the Tees.

The manipulation of mediaeval population statistics is a dangerous pastime for the amateur in demographic science. But the nature of the priest's job was so obviously determined by the number of souls he had to care for, that some treatment of the population problem - however inexpert - is essential.

From the poll-tax returns of 1377, Mr. Russell has calculated the total population of England at this period, including children and untaxed and indigent persons, to have been 2,323,373.[2] The tax-payers /

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[1] P. Hughes: The Reformation in England, map on p. 35. A good deal of the following section is based upon statistical material given in this volume for the period of the Reformation and by J. C. Russell in British medieval population for that of the 1377 poll-tax returns.

[2] Russell, op.cit., p. 146. Since a good many of the figures and arguments in this section on population are based upon Professor Russell's book, it may be as well to indicate the criticisms of this work made by Professor Postan. (M. Postan: Some economic evidence of declining population in the later middle ages (Economic Hist. Rev., 2nd Ser., Vol. 2, 1950) especially pp. 224-5.) These are chiefly that Mr. Russell relied too uncritically on surveys and extents for his evidence and that, on the whole, the quantity of his material was so large that he was unable to analyse it sufficiently. On a particular point, Professor Postan feels that Russell's multiplier of 3.5 for the conversion of the survey figures for households into the actual population numbers is not quite convincing and may be too low. I propose to accept Russell's figures, but these reservations should be noted.

Furthermore the apparent precision of some of the figures which I shall give may be misleading if they are taken too literally. It is, for example, rather absurd to say that the population /

tax-payers of the bishopric of Durham he numbers at 29,900, and by following his example as applied on a national scale of adding fifty per cent to this figure for non-adults and five per cent of the total for indigent and untaxed persons, the original number is converted to 47,094, as representing the total population of the bishopric at the end of Bishop Hatfield's long episcopate.

Mr. Hughes' figures for the period just before the Reformation (he cites the year 1517), are perforce less reliably obtained by working backwards from statistics of communicants submitted to the Archbishop of Canterbury in 1603. This figure was 2,039,115 for England.[1] He assumes that we must double it in order to get the total population and that we must then subtract a third of this to account for a probable increase of 50 per cent between 1517 and 1603. These operations produce a figure of 2,718,000, as the English population in 1517, and of 89,706, for that of the diocese of Durham. This latter figure seems particularly suspect, and represents, if accurate, a great increase in the Durham population in relation to that of the rest of the country between 1377 and 1513 /

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population of county Durham in 1377 was 20,619. (See below, p. 20.) We simply cannot know with that amount of certainty. Such a figure had much better be interpreted as "probably about 21,000." Exact figures, however, are necessary for calculations, and are equally of necessity the results of calculation. For these reasons I have retained them in the text rather than converted them into approximate round numbers.

[1] Hughes, op.cit., p. 32, quoting Brit. Mus. MS. Harley 280, ff. 157-172; cf. Russell, op.cit., p. 270, which gives 2,065,498 as the figure for England and Wales.

1513; while the population of the country as a whole increased by 22 per cent the population of the diocese of Durham increased by 90 per cent. In view of the fact that the population dropped even lower than the 1377 figure in the early fifteenth century (about 2,100,000 in 1400),[1] this increase seems even more doubtful, and I feel more inclined to accept Russell's view that the population of England and Wales in 1603 was about 3.78 millions, rather than the 4,130,996, which Mr. Hughes' calculation implies. If 3.78 millions be taken as the figure for 1603 we reach the slightly lower number of 2,500,860 for England and 82,530 for Durham diocese in 1517. This still represents a very large increase in the Durham population, during the 15th century and begs the question of whether the greater proportion of the increase came between 1377 and 1517, or between 1517 and 1603, which is the earliest date for which we have definite figures. Nevertheless if we must accept the figure of 82,530, with a good deal of reservation it is worth remembering that a comparison between the number of taxpayers in the poll-tax returns of 1377 and the number of adults in the chantry certificate returns of 1545 produces the startling information that, while the village of Horsley in Northumberland seems to have had a population of 66 over fourteen years of age in 1377, it had one of 360 of the same age group in 1545, the ratio being 1:5.5.[2]

To sum up then, and stressing the reservations which attach to /

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[1] Ibid., p. 269.

[2] Ibid., p. 276, table 10.19; p. 279, table 10.20.

to these figures, we may say that the population of England rose from 2,232,373 in 1377, to 2,500,860, in 1517, i.e. by 12 per cent; while that of Durham diocese over the same period rose from 47,094 to 82,530, i.e. by 75 per cent.[1] Why there should have been this great increase in Durham is not clear: there was, of course, some increase in industrial activity in the diocese during the period; inclosing in Yorkshire may have driven some peasant families northward into the palatinate and, finally, the civil wars of the 15th century may have driven some refugees into the sanctuaries of the palatinate.[2] Perhaps the likeliest explanation of the apparently /

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[1] It might be of interest at this point to have the modern population of the diocese taken from the Census of 1951.

	1931	1951
Durham (Administrative county and associated county boroughs).	1,486,175	1,463,416
Durham city (included in county figure).	18,147	19,283
Northumberland (Administrative county and associated county boroughs).	756,782	798,175
County borough of Newcastle (included in county figure).	286,255	291,723

(General Register Office, Census, 1951, England and Wales. Preliminary Report. (H.M.S.O., 1951.) pp. 11, 21.)

[2] For sanctuary see below, pp. 63-65.

apparently large increase, however, is that the figures for 1377 represent an underestimation of the actual population at that time. They were based on poll-tax returns, and tax returns form a notoriously doubtful basis for a computation of population, especially in the middle ages when opportunities for evasion were multifarious;[1] especially so, perhaps, in remote areas in the diocese of Durham. The brutal fact is, indeed, simply that the margin which must be allowed for error in all estimates of population in our period is very large.

It is possible to analyse still further the figures for 1377. From the poll-tax returns for Northumberland and Russell's estimate for county Durham[2] we may calculate the population of Northumberland to have been 26,475, and that of county Durham to have been 20,619. Unfortunately there are no equivalent figures for the later period, since the 1603 returns were made by dioceses, and Durham was not subdivided.

The bulk of the population in both counties was to be found, of course, to the east of the 600 feet contour line,[3] and some rough illustration of this may be given if we assume as a basis for calculation, that in both counties each parish contained approximately the same population, irrespective of its geographical area. Thus in 1377 there were 18 parishes in the Northumberland hills /

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1 Cf. Russell, op.cit., pp. 138-9.
2 Ibid., p. 144.
3 Hughes, op.cit., p. 35, map.

hills and 37 in the eastern lowlands: the resulting population figures for these two areas are 8,664 and 17,811. For Durham county, with 15 parishes to the west of the 600 feet level and 44 to the east, the equivalent population statistics are 5,242, and 15,377. For the diocese as a whole, the population in the highland area was therefore 13,906, and 33,188 in the lowlands.

Taking the area of the diocese as roughly 3,000 square miles[1] two thirds of the area being Northumberland, the average density of the population per square mile works out as follows:-

Diocese of Durham

Population Density Table (1377)

Area	Persons per square mile
Bishopric of Durham	15.7
County of Northumberland[2]	13.2
County of Durham	20.6
Northumberland west of the 600 feet contour line	7.2
Northumberland east of the 600 feet contour line	22.3
Durham west of the 600 feet contour line	9.2
Durham east of the 600 feet contour line	35.8

[1] Russell, loc.cit., has calculated on a basis of 2,018 square miles for Northumberland and 1,014 square miles for Durham; Hughes, op.cit., p. 34, gives the area of the diocese as 2,998 square miles. Using the average areas of parishes given by Hughes in the map on p. 35, I have calculated the area of Northumberland west of the 600 feet contour to be - in round numbers - 1200 square miles; and the eastern part of the county 800 square miles; West Durham roughly 570 square miles; and East Durham 430 square miles.

[2] Mr. Russell, working ahead from the 1086 density figures estimated from the average for Yorkshire, Cheshire and Lancashire in Domesday /

During the later middle ages the urban population of the diocese was very small. Newcastle was the only community in Northumberland to be listed as a borough in the 1377 poll-tax returns.[1] Russell has estimated its population at this period to be 3,970,[2] that is about 15 per cent of the population of county Northumberland. For the same period he has calculated that the smaller communities in which the remainder of the county population dwelt may be tabulated as follows, according to their 'class' /

Domesday Book, gives the population densities for Northumberland and Durham in 1377, as 17.2 and 14.2 persons per square mile, respectively (op.cit., p. 313). These figures do not seem to be very convincing, for, if we accept Russell's own computation of the areas of the two counties as 2,018 and 1,014 square miles respectively, we shall be faced with a total population for Northumberland of 34,500 as against a Durham total of 14,399. These numbers bear no relation to Mr. Russell's own figures of 16,809 taxpayers for Northumberland and 13,091 for Durham, and would mean assigning an impossibly high proportion of children and indigents to Northumberland - 17,691 out of 34,500. In any case, the figure of 5.4 persons per square mile given (also in the table on p. 313) as the density for both Durham and Northumberland in 1086 on the basis of the Domesday survey, does not seem to be related to the actual estimates of the population for this period made in the table on pp. 53-54. There the population of Northumberland is given as 7,927 and that of Durham as 4,983, including 1,000 for Durham city. Again taking the areas of the two counties as 2,018 and 1,014 square miles respectively we would have a density of 4 persons per square mile for Northumberland, and 4.9 for Durham. In these circumstances I feel justified in allowing my own calculations to stand, with the insistent proviso, that, no matter how accurate or inaccurate the calculations may be, the assumptions on which they are based remain assumptions, not provable facts.

[1] Ibid., p. 142.

[2] Ibid., p. 143.

'class' by size of population[1]:-

Communities arranged by class as above	Number of communities belonging to each class	Percentage of communities
Population between 1 and 25	32	20
Population between 26 and 50	56	36
Population between 51 and 100	56	36
Population between 101 and 200	9	6
Population between 201 and 400	3	2
Population between 401 and 800	1	-

Thus the bulk of the Northumberland population lived in communities of between 26 and 100 people, about 10 per cent inhabiting the few small towns such as Morpeth, Warkworth, Alnwick, and Bamborough, and 15 per cent being accounted for by Newcastle.[2]

Unfortunately the poll-tax returns did not cover the county palatine of Durham, for which we have no equivalent figures. Russell has estimated the population of the largest community, Durham city, to have been about 2,000 in 1377,[3] nearly a tenth of the /

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[1] Ibid., p. 308.

[2] Berwick, during most of our period a border fortress in the hands of English and Scots alternately, has not been included in these figures.

[3] Ibid., p. 145.

the population of the county. If we allow a rather larger population for the lesser urban centres than was calculated in the case of Northumberland, for in Durham the ports of Gateshead, Seaham, and especially Hartlepool handled a good deal of the export trade and fishing industry whose Northumberland equivalents were mainly centred in Newcastle, it is probably fairly safe to say that the percentage of the Durham population living in communities of over 100 was about 25 per cent and thus equal to the Northumberland figure.

It is impossible to give equivalent figures for the Reformation period with any certainty, since the chantry certificate returns do not provide the requisite data,[1] but from the evidence which is available for England as a whole, Mr. Russell has concluded that the urban population during the 15th and 16th centuries only just kept pace with the increasing rural population; "it is doubtful if as large a percentage lived in the boroughs in 1545 as in 1377".[2] Until direct evidence to the contrary is forthcoming, we may perhaps assume that what was true for England in general was true for the bishopric /

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[1] Ibid., p. 305-306.

[2] Cf. Postan, op.cit., p. 231, especially note 3. A certain amount of evidence has been produced for the Low Countries to show that, in the course of the 15th century, the population of the larger towns tended to increase by a small amount; while that of the smaller urban centres suffered a sharp decline. (Report on mediaeval demography by C. Cipolla, J. Dhonat, M. M. Postan and P. Wolff in IXe Congrès International des Sciences Historiques, Paris, 1950, pt. 1., p. 66. Especially the table for Brabant.) By the standards of one of the industrial centres of Europe, of course, even Newcastle would rank as a fairly small town.

bishopric in particular. On this assumption the average proportion of the population of the bishopric which lived in communities larger than mere villages of about 20 to 25 families, was about 25 per cent during the later middle ages. The greater number of the larger communities would probably be found in county Durham, but this preponderance was offset by the fact that Northumberland contained what was by far the largest town in the whole area - indeed the largest town in England north of York - Newcastle upon Tyne, the principal exporter of northern wool and coal.

Naturally most of the trade of the area was carried out in the towns, most of the salt and fishing industries on the east coast,[1] and a good deal of the coal, iron and lead mining too. Yet there was nothing specifically urban about the mining industries; essentially they were rural. Bishop Langley's iron mining venture in Weardale, for example, employed only five 'skilled' workers in the valley of the upper Wear, although there may have been additional labourers.[2] Thus it is hardly possible to generalise about the distribution of the population by occupation, except in so far as trade was concentrated in the towns, the salt and fishing industries were centred on the east coast ports, and the largest sheep runs were in the western hills. Most of the population was composed of farmers and agricultural labourers who dealt in both arable and pasture /

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[1] See above, pp. 12-13.

[2] Lapsley, op.cit., p. 511.

pasture, and among whom were full-time or part time miners and smelters.

Inextricably bound up with their occupation was the social status of the population. It is not possible here to attempt to work out a distribution of population on the basis of the terms of their tenure, to try to estimate the proportions of cottars, bondars, free tenants and so forth. There is a good deal of material for such a survey[1] and it would have its own value, but here it is more or less unnecessary. We are still concerned with the population of the diocese mainly as it would affect the parish clergy, and to the parish priest the precise tenurial status of the bulk of his parishioners was of little importance. What was important was the small group of upper class families - indeed sometimes only one family - who exercised local influence in his parish; so it will be as well to have some idea of what part of the population of the bishopric was composed of these comparatively well-to-do landowners. I am trying to avoid using a technical term such as 'knight' to describe this class, partly because it is difficult to distinguish accoladed knights from those who merely held small parcels of land by knight service, but mainly because for /

[1] For example, in Hatfield's Survey (S.S. xxxii), the Halmote Court Rolls of Durham Priory in the Archives of the Dean and Chapter, of which a selection is published in S.S. lxxxii, and the Percy Bailiff Rolls (S.S. cxxxiv). Two important articles on land holding in northern England have appeared in E.H.R: F. W. Maitland, Northumbrian tenures in vol. v, and J. E. A. Jolliffe, Northumbrian institutions in vol. xli.

for the later and greater part of our period distraint of knighthood had quite failed to ensure that all members of the particular class we are considering were technically knights.[1] Terms such as 'squirearchy', 'gentry' or 'people of influence' would define better the group I am attempting to isolate; the men who in the time of Edward I were involved in distraint of knighthood but who later preferred to use the less onerous title of 'esquire'; who held twenty librates or more of land; who would later sit on the commissions of the peace, and, on receipt of commissions of array, recruit and lead contingents of local men in the king's border armies. If they were not necessarily knights, neither were they necessarily tenants in chief of either the king or the bishop (for that matter knighthood did not necessarily involve tenancy in chief).[2] Few of them were 'barons', accorded individual summonses to Parliament. Their total claim to prominence so far as this discussion is concerned is the strength of their local influence, and /

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[1] On this subject see N. Denholm-Young, Feudal society in the thirteenth century; the knights, in his Collected papers, pp. 56-67. A note on p. 67 works out from information in C. Moor, Knights of Edward I (Harleian Soc., vols. 80-84.) that in any one year at the end of the 13th century there were 2,100 to 3,000 potential knights in England; of these there were about 1,250 actual accoladed knights and 500 "fighting knights" available for service in the royal armies (Ibid., p. 61.)

[2] W. Stubbs: Select Charters, 9th ed., pp. 448-449; G. T. Lapsley: The County Palatine of Durham, p. 287.

and lists of them have to be taken as and where we find them.

From Bishop Hatfield's Survey, it is possible to make an estimate of the numbers of the chief landowners in county Durham which will correspond nearly enough with the poll-tax returns. Among the 800 tenants and subtenants of the bishop of Durham listed in Hatfield's Survey there were some 70 families which were prominent on account of status or wealth or both, including the earls of Angus, Northumberland, Westmorland and Warwick, the baron of Graystock and the lord of Neville. Ten of these families were headed by knights so titled in the Survey, and four by 'chivallers'. Of the remainder 39 had held lands in the palatinate since 1264 and members of them were included in the list of 12 knights and 73 'chivallers' of the palatinate who were present at the battle of Lewes in that year;[1] while one - that of Morden - provided a sheriff of Durham,[2] and ten were included on account of their general importance in the history of the county: these include the Marmadukes, one of whom, together with Ralph Neville, led the 1301 revolt of the Haliwerfolc - the men of the palatinate - against royal and episcopal attempts to conscript them for military service beyond /

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[1] Bishop Hatfield's Survey (S.S. xxii) pp. xiv-xvi. Individual names in this list must be accepted only with the reservations indicated by C. H. Hunter Blair: Knights of Durham who fought at Lewes. (Archaeologia Aeliana, 4th Ser., xxiv, pp. 183-216.) For statistical purposes, however, the list will serve.

[2] Hatfield's Survey, p. 222.

beyond the Tyne and Tees.[1]

In order to account for the family dependants of the landholders listed in mediaeval extents and thus to obtain a figure for the total population belonging to this class, Russell has calculated that for England as a whole the number of landowners should be multiplied by an index number of 3.5;[2] this figure is, of course, very much an average, and a higher one might be necessary in the case of the more prominent families with which we are dealing here, the landowning members of which were likely to have more immediate dependents. On the other hand, a number of the most important held extensive estates outside the Palatinate, and many members of the families of Neville, Percy and Umfraville were probably rarely in the county. Thus I propose to accept Mr. Russell's index figure of 3.5 even for the upper class families since the effects of their larger family circles would be at least partially offset by many temporary absences from Durham: at all events 3.5 will not be an exaggeration.[3]

Multiplying the 1380 figure of 70 'chivallers', knights and nobles by 3.5, then, we reach the total of 245 for that part of the population of county Durham in whose hands were the main local strings which a clergyman - or anyone else - might have occasion to pull; nearly 1.2 per cent, that is, of the total population of the county /

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1 V.C.H. Durham, ii, pp. 151-2.
2 Russell, op.cit., p. 23.
3 Cf. above p. 16, note 2.

county in 1377 (20,619).

There is no Northumberland source corresponding to Hatfield's Survey for the 1377 period, but for a muster at Newcastle in 1323 the sheriff returned a list of knights and men at arms of the county, both groups composed of landowners of roughly the same social class as we considered in the case of county Durham.[1] This list gives us a figure of 112. Allowing for a fall of about 40 per cent which Mr. Russell calculates as occurring on account of the famines and plagues of the Black Death period,[2] we are left with about 67 for 1377. To this must be added 6 to account for the important families of Umfraville, Bertram, the barons of Gray-stock, the Dacres, Herles, and Stapletons not included in the 1323 list, bringing the total to 73. Multiplying this number of land-owners by 3.5 in order to account for their families, we have 255, that is just under one per cent of the total population of the county (26,475).[3]

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[1] Hodgson-Hinde, A history of Northumberland, i, pp. 302-3.

[2] Russell, op.cit., p. 263.

[3] It may be of interest to note here that in 1348 the returns for an aid collected by Edward III show that in Northumberland 167 persons held knights' fees or parts of them, and that the equivalent figure from a similar return of 1428 was 110. (Feudal Aids A.D. 1284-1431, vol. iv, pp. 52-90.) If by 1377 there was a decline of about 40% from 1348 the figure for that year would be 100. Multiplying by 3.5 as usual to account for the families, we would obtain the following results for the years 1348, 1377 and 1428:- 585, 351, 385. These totals are higher than the estimates of gentry given in the text, for many who held knights' fees in Northumberland lived elsewhere; while some who held fragments of fees were not of sufficient importance to be useful as military or civil leaders.

For the 1517 period the statistics are so uncertain (for county Durham really nonexistent) that the tentative figures for 1377 probably take this consideration of the population of the diocese as far as it can usefully go in the way of geographical and social analysis. Before concluding, however, it will be helpful to try to reach an estimate of what proportion of the total population was composed of clergymen.

For the late fourteenth century period, the main piece of statistical information comes from the poll-tax return of 1381, which gives the total clerical population of the diocese as 598, 330 from the archdeaconry of Durham and 268 from Northumberland.[1] This figure purports to include all the clergy in the diocese, beneficed or otherwise, but excludes mendicant friars.[2] According to Russell's estimate, there were about 2,590 friars in England in 1377, when the rest of the clergy totalled 31,239.[3] Assuming that the ratio of the friars to the other clergy was the same in Durham as in England, the diocese must have contained about 30 friars at this period, giving us a total clerical population of 628, about 1.3%, that is, of the entire population of Durham, and 2% of the adult population.

There is no such ready-made number of clergy for 1517 as for 1381 /

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[1] Russell, op.cit., p. 137, table 6.5. The diocese is omitted from the 1377 returns.

[2] Ibid., p. 133; Wilkins: Concilia, III, p. 150.

[3] Russell, op.cit., p. 146. Professor Knowles's figure, by implication, for c.1350 is 3,000. (Knowles, Religious Orders, p. 188.)

1381 but there is sufficient data to make an estimate possible. In the first place, it has been calculated that at the dissolution of the monasteries, 1536-40, there were at least 220 monks, nuns and canons regular in Durham houses.[1] It is certain, however, that this figure would underestimate the numbers of the regular clergy in 1517. The 1539 figure of 32 monks as the complement of Durham monastery, must be set against that of 43 for 1501; the figures for the Premonstratensian Abbey of Blanchland were 8 in 1482, raised by Bishop Redman to 14 in 1497, and 9 in 1536; at Alnwick there were 25 canons in 1500, but only 17 occur in the pensions list at the dissolution.[2] Thus in order to convert the dissolution figures for these houses into those of c. 1500, it would be necessary to multiply by 1.4. If this be treated as an index for the monasteries of the whole diocese the resultant figure for the early years of the 16th century would be 308 (i.e. 220 x 1.4). While this might slightly overestimate the numbers in 1517; the original figure of 220 did not include the complements of six of the twenty-seven houses listed, for which no figures were available.[3] It seems, reasonable to suppose therefore, that if 308 be allowed as the figure for 1517, an overestimation on one side may be offset by an /

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[1] D. Hay: The dissolution of the monasteries in the diocese of Durham (A.A. Ser. 4, Vol. xv.), pp. 72-73. This figure excludes the seventeen Augustinian canons of Hexham.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Ibid.

an underestimation on the other.[1]

The calculation of the numbers of secular clergy is less straightforward. In 1517 there were 115parishes in the diocese, each with its rector or vicar; but of these 17 were in fact canons of appropriating houses of Premonstratensian or Augustinian canons regular,[2] and have already be allowed for in the monastic totals. Thus there were only 98 parish cures to be filled by secular clergymen, and since the question of plurality did not enter /

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[1] For the sake of simplicity I have taken Mr. Hay's figures as they stood for the above calculation. It should be noticed, however, that his figures for the monastery of Durham have been revised by Canon S. L. Greenslade. (The last monks of Durham Cathedral Priory. (D.U.J. xli, pp. 107-113.) By using the local records as well as the pension and surrender lists which Mr. Hay consulted, Canon Greenslade has drawn up a list of 66 monks who must have been members of Durham Priory, its cells and its college at Oxford. Deducting the numbers of monks in the cells and at Oxford, this gives us the revised complement of about 38 for Durham itself just before the dissolution of its cells in 1536. It seems likely that Mr. Hay's figures for some of the other monasteries may also require revision.

These changes, however, would not affect the calculations I have made in order to suggest a figure for the regular clergy of the diocese at about 1517. The number, 43, remains valid for Durham priory in 1501, as do those of 14 and 20 for the monasteries of Blanchland and Alnwick in 1497 and 1500 respectively. Thus, when calculating by ratios, the probable increase over Mr. Hay's total of monks in these houses at the dissolution would be offset by the smaller multiplying number which would result and which would be used to convert the increased diocesan total of the dissolution period to the figure for 1517. In round figures, we would merely have to multiply about 260 by 1.2 instead of 220 by 1.4.

[2] See below, vol. 2, passim.

enter much into the holding of benefices with cure of souls,[1] this number can probably be accepted without qualification. The opposite is true of the canonries of the collegiate churches, of which there were 38. In fact in 1535 only 18 of them were held by clerks who held no other benefice in the diocese,[2] and this would seem to be a fair number to add to our 1517 figures in order to account for these canons.

From a collation of the evidence in Dugdale's Monasticon, the Victoria County History of Durham, volume 2, the Northumberland County History, the Fasti Dunelmenses and Mr. Neville Hadcock's map in Archaeologia Aeliana, there seem to have been about 50 hospitals. Most of these were very small foundations, giving employment to no clergy other than a single master or chaplain who looked after administration and the spiritual needs of the inmates: some indeed were so small as to be almost indistinguishable from chapels or chantries,[3] and during our period some declined in status to become hermitages.[4] On the other hand, a few, such as Kepier, Sherburn and Greatham required the attention of several chaplains in priestly orders as well as the wardens. In the early 16th /

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[1] It was, of course, prohibited by Canon Law to hold more than one benefice with cure of souls without special dispensation. (Eg. Exsecrabilis, C.J.C. Extravag. Joann. XXII, Tit. III, cap. 1.)

[2] Calculated from information in vol. 2 and F.D.

[3] Dugdale: Monasticon Anglican New ed., Vol. 6, pt. 2, p. 760.

[4] Neville Hadcock: Map of mediaeval Northumberland and Durham (A.A., Ser. 4, Vol. xvi), p. 160.

16th century it seems unlikely that there were more than about 65 ordained clergy in the hospitals, although at the beginning of our period there may have been as many as 80.[1]

So far these estimates of the numbers of secular clerks have been fairly definite; it is, however, much harder to trace members of the final two groups, the parish chaplains, curates, holy water clerks and other assistants who aided the rectors and vicars in most of the larger parishes, and the chantry priests and chaplains who sang the services in the chapels and chantries. It is very likely that at least one member of the former group was present in every parish in the bishopric, but as I have definite proof of the existence of only 34 of them.[2] I shall use this figure, with the reservation that it is an absolutely minimal estimate. The second group, although an estimate of its number is difficult, must have contained about half of the secular clergy in the diocese. Mr. Neville Hadcock has listed 224 chapels and chantries as existing at the end of our period, exclusive of the chantries founded inside many of the larger churches.[3] Of these latter I have been able to trace incumbents for 52 in the early 16th century, so that at about 1517 there must have been at least 276 chapels and chantries in /

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[1] At the dates of their foundation in the 12th and 13th centuries Kepier Hospital had a Master and 13 clergy, Sherburn, a Master and 3 priests, and Greatham a master, 5 priests and 2 clerks. (Dugdale, op.cit., pp. 731-4, 689-91.)

[2] See below, vol. 2, passim.

[3] R. Neville Hadcock, op.cit. Introd., pp. 159-207; 149.

in the diocese. It is doubtful, however, if they gave employment to this number of clerks, since a number of them were probably served by the parish chaplains or curates who assisted the rector or vicars.[1] Usually their appointment was in the care of the parish incumbent, as at Eglingham, where Robert de Bamburgh, the vicar c. 1432-37, was not very careful of his obligation.[2] It may be as well to deduct 25% from the figure of 276 to allow for such "pluralism"; which would leave us with 207 as the number of chaplains and chantry priests in 1517.

Thus there were about 422 secular clerks in the diocese in 1517, along with 308 regulars. Finally, some estimate must be made of the number of mendicant friars at this period. No definite figures are available, but if the ratio of friars to the other clergy remained as it was in 1377, a figure of 35 would result. If this very rough estimate be accepted for our present purposes, the clerical population of the diocese of Durham in 1517 would have been 422 + 308 + 35, that is 765, about .9% of the total population and 1.5% of the adult population.

On the whole, it seems unlikely that there were less than 765 clergymen in the bishopric at this time; there may well have been more, for totally unbeneficed clerks have had to be omitted from /

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[1] V.C.H., Durham, ii, p. 192. Cf. F. R. Raines, ed.: A history of the chantries within the County Palatine of Lancaster, Vol. 1 (Chetham Soc. Vol. 59, 1862-3), p. xiv, note 31; Mr Raines concludes that there was little plurality among the Lancaster chantry priests. (Ibid. p. xiii.)

[2] Loc. x, 16; M.C. 5630; etc.

from the estimate. On the other hand, it was not considered necessary to make a separate calculation of the numbers of clergy who held administrative and legal positions in the episcopal, priory and archidiaconal governments, since they were invariably beneficed in Durham or another diocese, and have thus been counted among the beneficed clergy. One reason for adhering to minimal numbers in this calculation of figures for 1517 has been the strong probability that the number of 598 given for 1381 does not represent all the tonsured clergy other than friars who were in the diocese at that time. It is unfortunate that we do not have the 1377 figures for the diocese of Durham, because a comparison of the 1377 returns for certain other dioceses with those of 1381 seems to indicate that the 1381 returns sometimes underestimate the numbers of the regular clergy.[1]

Thus in analysing the 1381 returns for Durham, it is perhaps best not to increase the estimate for the regular clergy as given for 1517, although probably Durham monastery, at least, had about 10% more monks in the earlier period.[2] The number of rectors and vicars /

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[1] Russell, op.cit., pp. 138-9.

[2] According to Canon Greenslade (op.cit., p. 112): "The total strength of the community (in Durham monastery) ... had not declined sharply in its last century ... The strength of the professed community, including those at the cells, is best seen from the elections of Priors, and was 88 in 1313, 81 in 1343, 72 in 1374, 69 in 1406, 71 in 1416, 65 in 1446, 71 in 1456, 66 in 1494, 74 in 1520, 66 at the Surrender in 1539; and two monks died late in 1539."

There were 61 monks in residence at Durham in 1310 and 47 in 1416 (M.C. 5985; P.C.R. iii, 46[illegible].) In view of the deaths due to the plagues, a figure of about 50 is probable for 1377 or 1381.

vicars at this time was 100, exclusive of the 17 regular canons who were serving cures. As we have seen[1] there were probably about 80 clergy in the hospitals, and in the absence of further information it is necessary to accept once more the figure of 34 as representing the parish chaplains, curates, and so on. In the collegiate churches, however, there were 27 canons who do not seem to have been beneficed elsewhere in the diocese, as against 18 in 1517. The total of the clerks mentioned so far, 308 regulars and 241 seculars, is 549, which, deducted from the diocesan poll-tax figure of 598, leaves a mere 49 to account for the chaplains and chantry priests - an impossibly low figure. The calculation which produced this number, based as it was upon the poll-tax figure, tends therefore to confirm Russell's impression that this return was an underestimation.[2] Nevertheless, it is not possible within the scope of this discussion to attempt a detailed reassessment of the 1381 figure, and in the following table it has been accepted in general, while the reservations which must be attached to any analysis of it have been indicated.

Diocese /

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[1] See above, p. 35.

[2] It should be remembered, of course, in estimating the number of chaplains and chantry priests for 1381, that the plagues probably took a heavy toll of these - usually poor - priests and that this may have resulted in a considerable amount of pluralism at this time. Moreover, a number or chapels and chantries were founded after 1381. At the same time the obscurity of most of these clerks must have made it very possible for them to escape inclusion in the poll-tax returns.

Diocese of Durham: Clerical population

	1377-81	c. 1517
Incumbents of benefices with cure of souls	100	98
Canons of collegiate churches	27	18
Masters and clergy of hospitals	80	65
Parish chaplains or curates, etc.	34+	34+
Chantry priests and chaplains	49??	207
Regular clergy	308+	308
Mendicant friars	30	35
Totals	628	765
Clerical percentage of total population	1.3%	.9%
Clerical percentage of adult population	2%	1.5%

The lower percentages in the later period are not really surprising. The population of the diocese seems to have increased considerably between 1377 and 1517, but the number of posts available for clergymen did not rise in proportion, except possibly in so far as the chantries were concerned. Thus a proportionate increase in the clerical population was not possible, and it is probable that the individual rector or vicar had more parishioners under his care in the early 16th than in the late 14th century; although the burden may have been lightened by some increase in the number of chaplains, both in the parishes and in the households of the gentry.

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A good deal, of course, depends on the reliability of the poll-tax figures for 1381, which, as we have seen, is suspect on account of possible evasions. These figures might also be held to be unrepresentative because they apply to a period immediately following the great plagues. Therefore a word on the plagues in the diocese of Durham might not be out of place at this point, if only to show that their effect was perhaps rather less than in more southerly parts of England.

Unfortunately it is not possible to compare the general mortality rates for Durham with those for the south; but Professor Hamilton Thompson's figures for deaths among the clergy in the diocese of York[1] may be compared with corresponding figures for Durham.

For each of the four archdeaconries of West Riding, Cleveland, East Riding and Nottingham in the diocese of York, Professor Hamilton Thompson has compiled from episcopal registers the following statistics for the five periods, 25 December 1347 - 24 March 1349, 25 March 1349 - 24 March 1350, 25 March 1350 - 31 December 1350, 25 March 1361 - 24 March 1362 and 25 March 1369 - 24 March 1370:- first the number of benefices in the archdeaconry to which the archbishop instituted; secondly the total number of institutions; thirdly the number of such institutions which followed upon the resignation and death, respectively, of the former incumbent; and finally /

[1] A. Hamilton Thompson, The pestilences of the fourteenth century in the diocese of York. (Archaeological Journal, lxxi (1914), pp. 97-154; tables 129-134.)

finally the percentage of the total number of vacancies which was caused by death. The table which follows sums up the results.

Period (see above)	Arch-deaconry	Number of bene-fices	Resign-ations	Deaths	Total number of instit-utions	Percentage of deaths to number of bene-fices
1347-9	W. Riding	187	16	9	25	4.72
	Cleveland	82	6	1	7	1.19
	E. Riding	106	8	7	15	5.64
	Nottingham	161	8	7	15	4.75
1349-50	W. Riding	187	18	90	108	41.12
	Cleveland	82	12	32	44	33.74
	E. Riding	106	11	56	67	49.24
	Nottingham	161	22	59	81	35.30
1350	W. Riding	187	12	7	19	3.61
	Cleveland	82	3	0	3	0.00
	E. Riding	106	6	3	9	4.14
	Nottingham	161	10	5	15	3.08
1361-2	W. Riding	187	29	25	54	14.31
	Cleveland	82	11	10	21	12.37
	E. Riding	106	10	10	20	10.58
	Nottingham	161	11	21	32	12.57
1369-70	W. Riding	187	9	25	34	13.31
	Cleveland	82	2	10	12	11.61
	E. Riding	106	2	12	14	9.62
	Nottingham	161	3	25	28	15.03

It is possible to compile a roughly similar table for the archdeaconries of Durham and Northumberland, although the register of Bishop Hatfield does not provide us with such consistently precise evidence as the registers of the archbishop of York. We know /

know, of course, the number of parochial benefices in the diocese during the periods under consideration - 119. (The collegiate churches have been excluded on account of the large number of their canons who were rarely resident and can therefore scarcely count as Durham clergy.) Unfortunately we do not have equally full information about the incumbents of all of these benefices in the years concerned. In the majority of cases, however, even where no record of institution is extant, general "fasti" material such as is given in volume two of the present work tells us whether or not a change of incumbent has taken place during a given period. But sometimes the gap between mentions of a benefice in the records means that we cannot ascribe such a change to one year - sometimes not even to one decade. If, for example, A.B. is known to have been rector of X in 1371, but no other incumbent is mentioned until C.D. is noted in 1389, not only might the change have taken place at any time between these years, but several changes might have occurred. Thus, for any one of the five periods we are considering, the 119 benefices may be divided into the following categories: (i) those in which the incumbent was changed because of death or resignation (ii) those in which the incumbent was changed for reasons unknown (iii) those in which the incumbent is known not to have changed (iv) those for which we have no information. For categories i and ii, therefore, we may compile figures equivalent to those in columns 4, 5 and 6 of the York table above. But instead of filling up the Durham column 3 with the invariable figure /

figure 11¶ for the total number of parochial benefices, it is proposed to give at this place a variable figure derived from the addition of the totals from categories i, ii and iii, that is, those categories for which we at least know definitely whether or not one or more changes took place. The percentage in column 7 will also be calculated on this figure and not that of the total number of benefices, since it is certain that deaths, of which we have now no record, took place among the incumbents of the benefices in category iv. For the purposes of the table, therefore, benefices in this last category, the succession of whose clerks is uncertain during the periods under review, will be ignored.

Diocese of Durham[1]

Period (see above)	Archdeaconry	Number of benefices (see above)	Resignations	Deaths	Total number of institutions	Percentage of deaths to number of benefices
1347-9	Durham	37	2	1	6	2.70
	Northumberland	29	1	0	3	0.00
1349-50	Durham	35	0	3	7	8.57
	Northumberland	29	0	1	2	3.45
1350	Durham	37	1	0	1	0.00
	Northumberland	31	4	0	6	0.00
1361-2	Durham	42	8	6	15	14.29
	Northumberland	37	6	4	11	10.81
1369-70	Durham	39	6	3	11	7.69
	Northumberland	38	11	2	18	5.26

Finally /

[1] The large number of institutions in 1361-2 and 1369-70 is partly explained by the extremely numerous exchanges of benefices which were taking place at this time. (See below, table 18, p. 425.)

Finally, let us compare the percentages of deaths in the York and Durham dioceses:

Period	W.Riding	Cleve-land	E.Riding	Notting-ham	Durham	Northumber-land
1347-9	4.72	1.19	5.64	4.75	2.70	0.00
1349-50	41.12	33.74	49.24	35.30	8.57	3.45
1350	3.61	0.00	4.14	3.08	0.00	0.00
1361-2	14.31	12.37	10.58	12.57	14.29	10.81
1369-70	13.31	11.61	9.62	15.03	7.69	5.26

From this table it is obvious that in the worst periods the clergy of the diocese of York suffered many more deaths from the plague than did those of the more northerly diocese of Durham, and that the worst period did not coincide in both dioceses: in York it came in 1349-50, and in Durham over two years later in 1361-62. It may be, of course, that the picture of mortality among the clergy which is suggested by these figures does not correspond with that for lay mortality; but, for the clergy at any rate, they show that Durham was unusual in having more deaths in the second outbreak of the plague in 1361 - the "Pestis Secunda"[1] than in the first; over most of the country, so far as the facts are known, the second wave of plague was considerably less severe.[2]

Apart /

[1] Cf. John Saltmarsh, Plague and economic decline in England in the later middle ages (Cambridge Historical Journal, vii, 1941-43) p. 37.

[2] Ibid.

Apart from this very important difference between the figures for Durham and for York, and the generally lower death rate in Durham (which is explicable enough in view of the remoteness of the diocese as a whole and Northumberland in particular),[1] the incidence of the plagues was similar in both dioceses. During 1349-50 there was a very severe first epidemic in York, and Durham - especially north of the Tyne - got off remarkably lightly, although there was a sharp increase over the previous year in the percentage of benefices vacated by death; taking the diocese as a whole, 6.25% as against 1.54%. Then in both dioceses there was a reversion to "normalcy" in 1350. In 1361-2 the second major epidemic was almost equally severe in York and Durham, but in 1369-70, although the mortality figures were fairly high in both dioceses, York was by a considerable margin the worse sufferer.

While the death-rate from the plagues was lower in the diocese of Durham than in that of York, it must be remembered that the figures for the fifteen-month period in 1347-49 show that the percentage of benefices which were vacant "per mortem" was even before the plagues lower in Durham than in York - a fact which was probably due rather to a larger proportion of resignations in Durham than to any greater longevity among the northern clergy. Thus, apart from the period 1349-50, the proportional increase in deaths over the /

[1] According to Saltmarsh, op.cit., p. 36, "mortality was (probably) greatest where the rat population was densest - that is to say where food for rats was most plentiful: first in the towns and especially the seaports and river-ports; then in the fertile corn-growing districts; and lightest in pastoral and thinly settled areas."

the normal rate was usually as great in the diocese of Durham as in that of York, and to contemporaries the catastrophy may have appeared as terrible to the north of the Tees as it did to the south.

For our purposes at present, however, in deciding the likely effect of the plagues on the figures for Durham's clerical population at the period 1377-81, it is probably sufficient to bear in mind that while the plagues considerably increased the proportion of vacancies caused by the death rather than the resignation of the previous incumbent, the remote position of the diocese, and the sparseness of the population except in the south and along the coast and some rivers ensured that the plagues would have rather less mortal effects in Durham than in the more central - and better documented - parts of England.

Part 3. The life of the people.

The mode of living of the parish clergy, resident rectors, vicars, chaplains and chantry priests, was usually very similar to that of the bulk of their parishioners. The strips of the glebe land lay side by side with those of the villagers, chaplains seem to have frequently worked small holdings equivalent to those of the "cottagers", their houses were similar to those of the peasants, except that, especially in Northumberland, many were largish fortified structures intended to give protection from the moss-troopers.[1]

Unofficially /

[1] See, for example, the description and photograph of the "Vicar's Pele" at Corbridge in N.C.H. x, pp. 209-216.

Unofficially, too, the parish clergy lived in a state of what Holy Church no doubt considered most unholy pseudo-matrimony - they kept concubines, that is to say. In sum, most of the social conditions of the laity applied also to the parochial clergy.[1] And this was true no less of those chaplains who served the altars and chantries in the houses and castles of the gentry and nobles. They shared the social conditions of the retainers of the magnates.

The housing of the peasants was primitive, and it is probable that no great developments occurred during our period.[2] The domestic architecture and furnishings of the gentry, however, were changing under the influence of altering needs of defence, and the influx of the novel ideas of merchants who had turned landlords or were increasing the luxury of their town houses, and of social climbers among the country gentry and burgesses.[3] In the north of /

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[1] On this paragraph, see V.C.H. Durham, ii, pp. 192-3.

[2] Ibid. pp. 198-9: "Not until England and Scotland were one kingdom could the Durham peasant feel safe enough to go to the expense of a brick or stone dwelling." Although it seems more probable that the greater part of expense of erecting peasant cottages would be borne by the landlords, the main point of the argument remains valid, so far as is possible in view of the complete lack of primary evidence - that is to say remains of the buildings themselves.

[3] For a general account of English domestic architecture in the period, see J. Evans: English art, 1307-1461 (Oxford Hist. of Eng. Art, V) pp. 118-38, 201-20. Since this section was written L. F. Salzman has published his Building in England down to 1540. (O.U.P., 1952.) Chapters 12 and 13 are particularly relevant to the problem of deducing the housing conditions of the mediaeval peasants.

of England, however, new forms did not develop so rapidly as in the south. In the north the castle, often in its early "tower" form,[1] remained as part of the defence against the Scots until the Union of 1603, although the larger castles, such as Bamborough, Wark and Alnwick, seem to have proved singularly ineffective in stopping the invaders.[2] They were even less effective in stopping the raids of the cattle thieves and sanctuary men who operated from the sanctuaries of Tynedale and Redesdale. Unfortunately, the bandits could not be relied upon to use the main routes across which the castles lay.[3] A more useful defence against them was provided by the defensive towers or 'peles' which were built on many of the hill-tops. These could be defended, were difficult to assault and provided shelter for the neighbouring peasantry during the raids. Many of them were built on both sides of the border. One of the best-known surviving Scottish examples is at Liberton, a suburb of Edinburgh.[4] Other centres of refuge were provided by the rectory houses already mentioned - the one at Corbridge closely resembles a pele - and by churches, which, in addition to possessing their ecclesiastical sanctuary rights, were themselves frequently fortified /

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1 Evans, op.cit., p. 124.

2 V.C.H., Durham, ii, p. 147.

3 See map no. 4.

4 A photograph and plan of Smailholm Tower is given in D. L. W. Tough: The last years of a frontier, p. 40. A very complete picture of the sites of both large and small fortifications is given in Hadcock, op.cit., map.

fortified.[1] Naturally the towers of the churches were particularly useful refuges, although not without their own dangers, as was evident in the case of John Sayer, who fell off the tower of Houghton church after he had climbed up it to escape from the Scots.[2]

In the later middle ages, then, conditions of building and housing were for the most part dictated by the needs of defence and of expendability in case of destruction. The church, the nobles and a few of the wealthier gentry were the only builders who could afford aesthetic considerations, and usually these could be applied only to the building of the largest structures - for example Durham Castle and Cathedral and Lumley Castle[3] - or to the fittings and furnishings of the smaller edifices.

The style of living was no less affected by the unsettled political state of the country. Jolliffe has pointed out the probability that many of the pre-Conquest features of land tenure exerted an influence on the society and the human geography of the bishopric right through the mediaeval period.[4] A social structure based on the relationship between man and lord rather than between tenant and landlord, and agricultural organisation based not so much upon /

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[1] The fortified churches seem to have been especially characteristic of the Western Marches. (V.C.H. Cumberland, ii, p. 257.) The narrow-chancelled churches, which are so characteristic of the border area, were so constructed to avoid the necessity of using wooden beams in roofing them, and thus to avoid the danger of fire.

[2] Historical papers and letters from the northern registers. Ed. by J. Raine. (Rolls Ser. 61.) pp. 249-250.

[3] Evans, op.cit., p. 121; plate 58.

[4] Jolliffe, op.cit., p. 1.

upon the manor as upon the 'shire', which was composed of many vills,[1] were perhaps the most relevant features of this society. The tendency was thus towards larger units of social organisation than those in the south, which had been more thoroughly manorialised since 1066.

If tradition had not gone far to create this system, however, it would have been necessary to invent something like it in order to meet political and military necessity in the two centuries following Edward I's attacks on Scotland. The lord of the shire or of the valley, with his tenants and estates concentrated in one or a few groups, was better able to act as the protector and military leader of his neighbourhood than was the southern lord of the manor. The great baronies of Alnwick, Mitford, Wark and Bothal, the lordships of Redesdale and Prudhoe, held in the late 14th century by the families of Percy, Grey, Bertram and Umfraville, illustrate how traditional influences backed up by political and military necessity pressed upon and moulded the forms of Anglo-Norman feudalism. Heighingtonshire and Bedlingtonshire, two groups of vills held by the bishop and the prior and convent of Durham respectively, reveal the action of similar influences.[2]

In the valleys of the Pennines and Cheviots family ties were also very close, bringing sons, distant cousins and "in-laws" into associations similar to the clans of the lowlands of Scotland. Criminal /

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[1] Ibid., p. 2.
[2] Ibid., pp. 8-9.

Criminal law consisted of the vendetta and very little else. The entire population of Tynedale, we are told, grouped themselves round the four families of Charlton, Robson, Dodd and Mylborne.[1]

The final external influence upon society in the north developed from the 13th century onwards in the shape of the commissions of array which were issued by the king to nobles and gentry. On these commissions the royal armies were raised, and in the north as elsewhere the individual contingents tended more and more to be formed into the private retinues of their upper class captains. In the north the process came very naturally into a society already largely based upon the relationship of the lord to the men of the shire. When a Percy was Warden of the Marches, the nucleus of the royal army was inevitably the men of the Percy lands in Northumberland.

A good deal of civil and ecclesiastical patronage, needless to say, went along with military leadership in the northern marches, and its dispensation on the basis of personal contacts tended to relax the rigidity of the class structure, especially in its upper reaches. If we follow a chronological course through the extant lists of the gentry of Northumberland which were periodically compiled, usually as records of military leaders, we find that new names frequently occur.[2] There were chances of social advancement in /

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[1] Priory of Hexham, vol. 1 (S.S. xliv), app., pp. clvii-clviii. Cf. V.C.H. Cumberland, ii, p. 269, for notes on the Armstrongs, Elwolds, Croosyers and Nixons in the west of the border lands.

[2] Hodgson-Hinde, op.cit., i, pp. 295, 303, 324, 339-40.

in the performance of official duties in the commissions of the peace and wardenships of the marches and in the service of the bishops and noble families.[1] At the same time a number of merchant families - especially those of Newcastle - were moving into the ranks of the country gentry,[2] as their equals were doing all over the country. The considerable difference between the size of the holdings of the wealthier and poorer peasants indicates that lower down the social scale an equivalent fluidity of status existed, some of the peasants having collected substantial amounts of land into their hands.[3]

And as for the qualifications needed by the social climber, it seems that ability to attract the favourable attention of a "good lord" by faith and good service, administrative or military, was the chief quality required by the upper classes, and shrewd business acumen combined with unscrupulousness by the lower.[4] Education played little part outside of ecclesiastical circles. On the other hand opportunities for academic education were good in the diocese of Durham following the conversion of Durham Hall, Oxford, into /

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1 By the 16th century the wardenships themselves sometimes passed from the hands of the nobles into those of the lesser gentry. (Reid, op.cit., p. 92; M. H. and R. Dodds: The Pilgrimage of Grace, ii, p. 103.)

2 E.g. the Lawsons. (N.C.H. xii, 372-3.)

3 Hatfield's Survey, passim.

4 Jolliffe, op.cit., pp. 15-25, suggests that the thegns and drengs of the middle ages may have been originally officials of the lords, appointed to look after groups of vills within the lordship or shire.

into an endowed college under Bishop Hatfield in 1380. Of its eight "secular scholars" - i.e. non-regulars - four had to come from the diocese, and the others from Northallerton and Howdenshires, which were lands of the prior and convent in Yorkshire.[1] The best schools for the laity were probably those attached to the collegiate churches in county Durham and the Durham almonry and farmery or infirmary schools, the last having been founded by a group of laymen.[2] By the 15th century, too, Durham city possessed the grammar school endowed by Bishop Langley in 1414, which sent students to Oxford independently of Durham College.[3] At a lower level, most parish churches and monasteries made some provision for elementary education, and some of the chaplains were expected to teach.[4]

In spite of the civilising influence of the church, however, life in the bishopric in our period was a rough and dangerous business. Never, perhaps, since Hadrian's Wall held back the Picts, had northern English life been quite so dominated by the needs of defence against an external enemy.[5] The administration of the wardens of the marches placed the entire population of Northumberland under what might later have been called martial law. An /

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1 See V.C.H. Durham, i, pp. 365-6, and sources quoted there.
2 Ibid., p. 369.
3 Ibid., p. 371.
4 Ibid., p. 365, etc.
5 The Norse attacks of the 9th - 11th centuries tended to fall to the south and west of the bishopric.

An intense hatred and fear of the Scots helped to poison the atmosphere of the whole border area. Durham seamen were held as hostages in Scottish jails pending the payment of ransom.[1] As in the modern frontier zone between Vienna and Berlin, the need for official passes and identification papers grew in proportion as suspicion developed.[2] In addition to the terror of attack from across the border, was the constant fear of raids by the bandit gangs of the valleys. The persons of the bishops and ecclesiastical ambassadors were not much more secure than the crops and flocks of the peasants,[3] and the records are full of episcopal and royal orders to capture and bring to trial the leaders of the reivers - and then to recapture them after they had escaped![4] To sum up, the bishopric of Durham lay in a border area in times of acute political tension; and in its small way it suffered all the hardships of the more famous border lands from the basin of the Mississippi to that of the Oder.

Nevertheless, the need to protect life and property - or even to plunder and destroy them - did draw the classes of society more closely /

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[1] E.g. R.L. ff. 182, 184v-185.

[2] In 1496 James Wilson, a resident of Scarborough, was accused of being a Scot, and found it necessary to obtain a testimonial from the bishop's official that he was born in Bishop Auckland of local parents. (Register of Fox (S.S. cxlvii), p. 29. Cf. Dodds, op.cit., i, p. 82.)

[3] In 1317 Gilbert Middleton robbed two cardinals and held as hostage Bishop Beaumont. (Scriptores Tres (S.S. ix), p. 100.)

[4] E.g. C.P.R., 1317-21, p. 88; L.P., i, p. 685.

closely together in the north of England than in the south. It has become a truism to say that the Wars of Independence awakened Scotland into self-conscious nationhood more thoroughly than England was ever so awakened before the 16th century.[1] But it is also true to say that they brought to northern English society a unity and common purpose which increased the differences between the north and south of the kingdom. While this coalescence was a social rather than a political phenomenon, it was none the less definite, and none the less important, and it was accelerated by the ever-present tendency of the English parliaments to shift the trouble and expense of border defence on to the shoulders of the northern nobility and gentry. The fact that the Peasants' Revolt did not spread to the north of England may not be unconnected with the northern peasant's need for the protection of his lord against the Scots and the reivers. Across the border the tottering political structure of the early Stewart monarchy remained equally immune from social revolution in the era of the Jacquerie, the Peasants' Revolt and the industrial riots in the Netherlands and Italy.[2] Needs of defence from foreign invaders and native bandits helped to safeguard the existing structure of society from violent attacks.

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[1] Witness the sentiments in Barbour's Brus, completed in 1376. (J. Barbour: The Bruce. Ed. Mackenzie. Lond., 1909, p. xvii.)

[2] It is fair to note, however, that neither in Scotland nor in northern England were there any of the large-scale industrial or commercial towns which provided all of the agitation and most of the physical force loosed by the social revolts which have been mentioned.

C H A P T E R T W O

POLITICS

Part 1. The structure of politics.

During the later middle ages local issues were on the whole the most powerful influences in northern English politics. When it came to the point, the kind of government imposed upon the people depended on the Nevilles and Percies, Dacres and Cliffords, rather than the contemporary ruling faction at Westminster. Even the Scottish wars, which could on occasion arouse national interest, remained for most of the time private issues between Scottish family and English family, Scottish castle and English castle, not infrequently merging with feuds between families on the same side of the border.

The prominence of local politics in the north was increased by contrast with the expansion of royal power over the south and centre of the country. The efforts made by Edward I to maintain and increase royal control over both local administration and the feudal tenure of jurisdictional rights have been stressed by a succession of historians.[1] From the period of baronial revolts in /

[1] We may cite the inquest of 1274 and the ensuing Statutes of Westminster and Gloucester, which were directed against both irregularities in the local shire and hundred courts and the excessive independence of local franchisal courts. (Statutes of the Realm, i, pp. 26-39; 45-51, passim.) The "quo warranto" proceedings aimed at making specific royal authority necessary for the exercise of all franchisal rights of jurisdiction. (H. M. Cam: The hundred and the hundred rolls, Lond., 1930, p. 236.)

in the reign of Henry III the English nobility began to take an active part in the central administration, whereas they had previously merely asked that it preserve their liberties and privileges on their estates. Their interest in the central government was intensified in the 14th century when Edward III's war policy linked the aspirations and needs of the aristocracy with those of the crown and centred them upon the successful prosecution of the war against France.

In the north of England, however, such centralising tendencies had less effect. The distance of this area from the administrative centres hindered the visitations of the royal officials: the justices, for example, on the assizes of nisi prius, gaol delivery and oyer and terminer.[1] It was impossible for the king to challenge the great franchisal rights of the northern nobility, so necessary were they as defenders of the borders against the Scots. Their quasi-royal power was an essential part of their military qualifications. The northern nobles formed a small group within the English aristocracy whose military interests were bound up not with the king's French war, but with its Scottish offshoot - itself the development of an earlier conflict between Edward I and the Scotland of Wallace and Robert Bruce. Some of these nobles, the Umfravilles, for example, who had inherited the earldom of Angus by marriage,[2] had interests and lands on both sides /

[1] The general eyre was abandoned in the reign of Edward III. The assizes of gaol delivery and oyer and terminer were carried out by royal justices supervising juries of local nobles and gentry. (Maitland: The constitutional history of England, pp. 138-141.)

[2] G. E. C(okayne), Complete peerage, New ed. i, pp. 147-151.

sides of the border, and it would have been only too easy for them to follow the 13th century examples of Bruces, Balliols and Comyns and transfer their sympathies to the northern kingdom. In his relations with these nobles, the king was bound to step warily, the more so as their position, already strong from the military point of view, received additional support from the jurisdictional immunities which they enjoyed in some of their lands.[1] When Edward I seized the franchise or liberty of Tynedale into his own hands in 1295, it had to be preserved as a franchise;[2] and it was not possible for 14th century English monarchs to intrude their relatives into the northern liberties as, slightly further south, Edward III secured the Lancaster estates as a county palatine for Henry of Lancaster and John of Gaunt successively.[3] Needless to say, the custom which helped to preserve the northern franchises did not operate on a purely historical basis; franchise, as we shall see, was of very practical use to the men of the 14th and 15th centuries insofar as it provided a refuge from enemies and, not infrequently, from the law. If the men of "Haliwerfolc" - the lands of St. Cuthbert, i.e. the county palatine of Durham - could /

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[1] The Umfraville lordship of Redesdale, for instance, went with palatinate rights. (See map no. 2.)

[2] In 1346 it was placed under the Warden of the East March. (Reid, The King's Council in the North, p. 25.) But it did not become part of the county of Northumberland until the reign of Henry VII. (I. D. Thornley: Destruction of sanctuary (Tudor Studies, ed. Seton-Watson) p. 200.)

[3] W. Hardy, ed.: Charters of the Duchy of Lancaster, Lond., 1845. pp. 9-11, 32-34, 65-70.

could invoke the privileges of the palatinate against their own bishop when they refused to follow Anthony Bek to war outside of Durham county in 1300,[1] they were even more likely to be able to use them in order to prevent the execution of royal commands, particularly as the king's writ could reach them only "by kind permission" of the lord palatine.[2]

These several influences, the Scots wars, the northern aristocracy, the tradition and practical needs which preserved the liberties - and linked with them the sanctuaries - all helped to form the political background in northern England during our period and to give the north political interests apart from the rest of the kingdom. To a certain extent the political problems of the north were kept in a separate compartment by the Westminster government itself. Parliament, for instance, tended to hand over the frontier question to the northern nobles, and to grant them, or confirm their possession of, the lands, jurisdictions and offices which provided the economic and political power to deal with it.[3]

But /

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1 Lapsley: The county palatine of Durham, pp. 128 et seq.

2 That "breve regis de iure currere non debet" in the palatinate was a favourite plea of the bishops. (E.g. Hutchinson: Antiquities of Durham, i, p. 276.) Royal writs concerning lands or individuals in the palatinate were addressed to the bishop. (R.P.D., ii, pp. 835-1124.) The right to exclude royal writs and officials was, of course, one of the hall-marks of a lord palatine.

3 Reid, op.cit., pp. 15-16. The government also tried to make the northern lords assume responsibility for the outlaws who invested the more inaccessible franchises and sanctuaries by fining them for the destruction caused by the raids. (Wylie: Henry V, i, p. 333.)

But although these official wardenships of the marches, commissions of the peace, lieutenantcies, sheriffships, and so on, were important additions to the powers and prestige of the northern aristocratic families, the resources which enabled their duties to be carried out were the result of feudal estates and privileges. Thus the roots of the power of the northern nobles were to be found in their hereditary lands in Yorkshire and the northern counties. They did not base their influential position upon marital relationships with the royal house. The Nevilles and the Percies, to select the two chief northern families, did not join any of the branches of the house of Plantagenet created by the marriages of Edward III's numerous offspring. Although both families were deeply involved in the Wars of the Roses, neither had a direct claim to the crown itself;[1] they remained primarily lords of the north, even when they held important offices in the central government.[2]

On the other hand several members of these families were closely involved in national politics and possessed important estates to the south of the Tees - and, for that matter, to the south of the Trent. Ralph Neville, the first earl of Westmorland, on /

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[1] The Nevilles, however, were related to the house of Lancaster. (Stubbs: Constitutional History, iii, p. 18.) And possibly the Percies aimed at the crown in 1399 and 1403. (Steel: Richard II, p. 276; Macfarlane: Yorkists and Lancastrians (C.M.H. viii) p. 366.)

[2] On the accession of Henry IV, the earl of Westmorland became constable and the earl of Northumberland marshal. (Wylie: Henry IV, i, pp. 23, 26.) In 1376 Lord Percy had served on the Council. (Stubbs, op.cit., ii, p. 443.)

on his death in 1425, was seised of the manors of Wikes, Frompton, Ledenham, Fulbeck and Wastingburgh in Lincolnshire, the manor of Chesthunt in Hertfordshire, Clavering and Calmore in Essex, and the manor of Basingbourne in Cambridgeshire;[1] while Henry Percy, second earl of Northumberland, who was killed at St. Albans in 1455, held at that time the manors of Dagenham and Cokerell in Essex, Foston in Leicestershire and fifty eight manors in Lincolnshire.[2] These are, of course, in addition to the main estates of both families, which lay in Yorkshire, Northumberland, Cumberland and Westmorland. Thus although the main interests of these families lay in the north, they still had sufficient property elsewhere to give them something of a vested interest in the unity and good governance of England. The king acquiesced in their great authority largely because of the importance of the duties which they were expected to perform,[3] and on the whole they were content to rule the north as an integral part of England.[4]

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1 W. Dugdale: The baronetage of England, Lond., 1675, i, p. 298.

2 Ibid., p. 281.

3 Cf. Edward II's aggrieved remonstrance sent to Bishop Beaumont when he failed to defend the palatinate in 1323 (Hutchinson, op.cit., p. 271; V.C.H. Durham, ii, p. 156); and the obligations of the bishops outlined in the introduction to Fox's Register (S.S. cxlvii), p. xxviii.

4 Even when in 1406 a partition of the country was contemplated, as it appears, by the rebels, Northumberland, Mortimer and Owen Glendower, it is interesting to see that the part allotted to Northumberland lay north of a line from Worcester to southern Norfolk - a boundary very far south for a lordship of the north, and indicative of the Percies' southern interests. (Wylie: Henry IV, ii, p. 380.)

What the northern lords do seem to have expected, however, was to be left alone to rule the north in their own way and in their own interests. One of the complaints made by the Percy rebels against Henry IV was that the central government legislated too much for the north[1] - a rather unusual "fault" in our period. Even when the personal power of the northern aristocracy was broken along with the privileges of franchise by the Tudors, the king still found it necessary to evolve a separate government for the north, which, after some experimenting, took final shape in 1537 as Henry VIII's Council in the North.[2]

This was, perhaps, the crowning testimony to the need for treating the north separately in matters of government. For two centuries the northern nobility had been a most important - in the 15th century the predominant - part of the national aristocracy. The Percies were by far the most dangerous opponents of Henry IV, and the house of Neville, represented by the earl of Warwick, was the most powerful influence on the Wars of the Roses after those of York and Lancaster themselves. This predominance, while increasing the significance of the north in national politics, combined with the traditional individuality of its tenurial and social systems to add to its comparative autonomy.

So much at present for the aristocracy, the legal rulers of the /

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[1] Ibid., p. 213.
[2] Reid, op. cit., p. 152.

the north. But of no less importance in determining day to day life in the countryside - especially in its remoter districts - were its illegal rulers, the reivers and sanctuary men who carried on a veritable reign of terror during the later middle ages.

The rights of the sanctuaries had two origins, one ecclesiastical, the other lay. Every mediaeval church was a sanctuary, granting fugitives who sheltered within it a respite of forty days and a chance to abjure the realm. The secular origin of sanctuary lay in royal grants of franchises. A criminal, pursued by royal officers, could enter a franchise such as Durham or Chester and, by swearing allegiance to its lord, become a "subject" of the franchise, permanently secure from royal justice.[1] When, as in Durham, Hexham and Beverley (in Yorkshire), sanctuary had both ecclesiastical and secular roots, the two sources became hopelessly confused, and inevitably the most extreme rights were claimed. Obviously, then, the great extent of the franchises in northern England[2] made it very simple for a fugitive from the justice of, say, the king or the Bishop of Durham to take refuge in the archbishop of York's franchise and sanctuary of Hexham. It is hardly an exaggeration to say that sanctuary made possible the prolonged and successful careers of the thieves of Tynedale and Redesdale, who /

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[1] For details about the origin and development of sanctuary in England, and more especially of its gradual destruction under the Tudors, see Thornley, op. cit. Cf. also article on sanctuary in Encyclopaedia Britannica, 11th ed. The rediscovery of the importance of sanctuary is of the 20th century. The cautious note in V.C.H. Durham ii, pp. 26-27 reflects opinion on the subject in the 1st decade of the century.

[2] See map no. 2.

who used their refuges as bases for attack and storehouses for their plunder. And in addition to the franchises, it must be remembered that in the north lay the most permanent sanctuary of all - using the word in its non-technical sense. For there was no surer way of evading the justice of the king of England than by crossing the border into Scotland.[1]

Sanctuary was deep-rooted both in ecclesiastical and moral law and in secular tradition,[2] and very often it was justified, especially in the purely ecclesiastical variety of forty days' respite and a chance to leave the country: not all seekers of sanctuary were robbers and murderers.[3] Yet the more extreme privileges of sanctuary, which the government of Henry VIII made it one of its chief duties to eradicate, did more than anything else to make the north a perpetually unsafe district. Its significance is sufficiently attested by the importance attached to it by contemporaries themselves. When the sixth earl of Northumberland became Warden of the Marches, he wrote forthwith to ask the king for instructions regarding (inter alia) criminals escaping /

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1 Tough, Last years of a frontier, p. 37; Dodds, Pilgrimage of Grace, ii, p. 246.

2 It was "a liberty incident to all nations to succour banished men." (Tough, loc. cit.)

3 Between 1479 and 1536 at Beverley 495 men took the oath as seekers of sanctuary, and although 186 were accused of homicide or manslaughter, most were debtors. (Reid, op. cit., p. 14.) Cf. the lists of sanctuary seekers in Sanctuarium Dunelmense et sanctuarium Beverlacense (S.S., V) passim.

escaping into Scotland and Tynedale and Redesdale;[1] in 1536 Chapuys, the Imperial ambassador in London, reported that sanctuary men were being imprisoned "in advance" lest they join the Pilgrimage of Grace;[2] Beverley, the first district in the East Riding to revolt in 1536, did so because it had been deprived of sanctuary rights.[3]

The prominence so far given in this section to the militant elements in northern politics, and the conditions in which they flourished, is, I think, justified by their prominence in political affairs. They were, so to speak, the "influencing elements;" while the more numerous farmers and townspeople were the groups which were influenced by them. Politics was naturally of less importance to these more settled portions of the population. Thus, although northern social and tenurial tradition, which as we have seen had a considerable individuality,[4] tended to differentiate their conditions from those of their southern counterparts, they were affected less by the idiosyncracies of northern government than were the governing classes. The burgesses were the only non-aristocratic group which had permanent connections with the south /

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1 E. B. de Fonblanque: Annals of the house of Percy, i, pp. 556-558. Interestingly enough, the king's reply referred to "pretended liberties and franchises." (My italics.)

2 Dodds, op. cit, i, p. 117.

3 Ibid., p. 145. Miss Reid suggests deprivation of sanctuary rights as a reason why the men of Durham joined in the revolt. (Op. cit., p. 129.)

4 See above, pp. 10, 49-51.

south of the country. Trading towns, unless they were within palatinates,[1] depended for their most important privileges upon royal grants. Even Alnwick, which was a borough of barony of the Percies, had its corporate status recognised by royal charter of Henry VI;[2] while royal favour did much to make Newcastle the most important seaport north of the Tees and a staple for the wool trade of the northern counties.[3] The sympathies of these towns were commercial and national as well as local. Newcastle's prosperity depended upon the coal trade with London[4] and the wool trade with Flanders,[5] and her government was based upon royal charters.[6] The townspeople detested the outlaws - the moss-troopers, as they were called - as much as did the peasants, and they had less chance than the peasants of taking to thieving on their own account. They were thus cut off from the atmosphere created /

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1 The most important towns in the palatinate of Durham were Durham city, Gateshead, Jarrow, South Shields, Seaham and Hartlepool.

2 Tate: History of Alnwick, i, p.249. Cf. Henry VI's grant of the privileges of free port, etc., in 1464. (Ibid., p. 238.)

3 Brand: History of Newcastle, ii, pp. 223-224, 256.

4 Ibid., p. 253 et seq.

5 Ibid., pp. 220, 223-224.

6 E.g. ibid., pp. 155, 169. In 1400 Newcastle achieved the status of a county, with her own sheriff, "a step towards incorporation." (M. Weinbaum: The incorporation of boroughs, Manchester, 1937, p. 54.)

created by the family feuds and banditry to a greater extent than was possible for the country peasants or gentry. In 1564 the Newcastle Society of Merchants pointedly refused to allow anyone born in Tynedale or any other such place to become an apprentice in the town.[1] It was a sufficiently final indication that the town stood for a way of life quite apart from that of the border hills.

The towns of the palatinate of Durham, although dependent for their privileges on charters from the bishop in place of the king, had their own interests and connections in the south and abroad. Hartlepool, for example, seems to have carried on a fairly extensive foreign trade based on the export of herrings and other fish.[2] It also elected its mayors and aldermen on the authority of a charter from Bishop Poore dated 1230.[3]

At the extreme north of Northumberland, sometimes in the hands of the English, sometimes in those of the Scots, lay the port of Berwick upon Tweed. Its position on the border during the wars led to its decline in commercial importance in the course of the 14th century;[4] but from the conclusion of the Treaty of Northampton in 1328, there was retained in the town the nucleus of an English government for Scotland on the model of the one which Edward /

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1 Brand, op. cit., ii, pp. 228-229.
2 Sharp: A history of Hartlepool, p. 170.
3 Ibid., appendix, pp. iii-iv.
4 Scott: History of Berwick, p. 73.

Edward I had established.[1] In the mid-14th century, therefore, there was a permanent pocket of royal officialdom at the most extreme point of the marches.

Nearly all the towns in the bishopric of Durham, that is to say, whether or not they lay within the palatinate, were to some extent outside of the governmental structure of the great families and franchises, and their main connections outside of it were with the king.

The peasants, on the other hand, had few if any contacts at all outside of their immediate locality, and their influence on northern political developments during our period was quite negligible. The one exception lies in the fact that many of the farmers and shepherds of the northern and western hills combined their agricultural pursuits with participation in the raids made under their neighbours, the outlaw chiefs of Tynedale and Redesdale.

But whether they lived in highlands or lowlands, the peasant and his family depended for their safety and livelihood on their most proximate lord, either law-abiding or criminal. So far as politics was concerned the peasants were merely instruments of their lords' policies. This seems to have been especially true in the bishopric of Durham. There were two occasions during our period when the English peasants acted as a political force on their own behalf. In the first - the Peasants' Revolt - the north took /

[1] Ibid., p. 56.

took no part; in the second - the Pilgrimage of Grace in 1536 - although there appears to have been a social revolt in the north-western counties mainly directed against inclosures and unpopular landlords, the commons of Durham and Northumberland took little action except as directed by their lords. According to the Misses Dodds,[1] the revolt in the bishopric was mainly the work of the gentry under the influence of the Percies, who had been disinherited by the king.

On no other occasion did the peasants show any greater inclination to exert themselves as a force in northern politics, so that in the following discussion of the course of political development they will take little part except insofar as the people being ruled were of any importance to the rulers - and this, as may be imagined, was not very far.

Part 2. The course of politics.

This section is concerned with what happened in the north between the years 1311 and 1540, inasmuch as the "happenings" were of a political nature; inasmuch, that is, as they affected the governing of the country. Two points come to mind as indicating both change and permanence in the personnel of politics and the nature of political issues in the course of our period. The wars against the Scots continued, but by the 16th century the leadership /

[1] Op. cit., i, p. 192.

leadership of the English armies had returned to the hands of southern nobility holding royal commissions - Suffolk, Norfolk, Somerset - from those of the northern noble families, who had directed the wars as matters of family pride during most of the 14th and 15th centuries since the Treaty of Northampton. Of course, the contingents of these forces were still raised and led by the northern gentry,[1] but the overall leadership became a national affair as it had rarely been since the days of Edward I. Such was the change in personnel controlling an issue which remained fixed. The changes in the issues themselves can be illustrated by contrasting the rebellion which opened the 14th century with that which followed the dissolution of the lesser monasteries. The first concerned Durham alone and was an assertion of the traditional rights of the dwellers in the palatinate against the exactions of palatinate officials and the attempts of both king and bishop to force them to fight outside of county Durham, and it was successful. The second concerned the whole of the north of England and had its roots in popular resistance to religious and economic changes, the latter being mainly the landlords' development of inclosures and the system of rack-renting, and it was a failure. But however the conditions which produced rebellion had altered, both revolts were attempts to resist change, and both were led by the same class in the bishopric, that is to say /

[1] From time to time the sheriffs of Northumberland made returns listing the gentry of the border areas, together with the numbers of fighting men they might be expected to raise. (E.g. Hodgson-Hinde, A history of Northumberland, i, 346-347.)

say the gentry, neither the highest nobility nor members of the peasantry. Perhaps the most significant point is that while it was possible to revolt successfully against changes in 1301, in 1536 it was not.

To some extent this was no doubt due to the fact that the changes in the mid 1530s were directly sponsored by the national government; while in 1300-1301 they were of mainly local interest, sponsored by the bishop and opposed by his chief tenants. It is difficult to avoid the conclusion, however, that by 1530 the northern families had lost a certain amount both of vitality and of interest in local affairs. The reasons for these developments may perhaps be most clearly shown in a brief resume of the histories of the chief northern families during the later middle ages.

At the very beginning of the period - to some degree, indeed, before it had begun - the interests and influence of three of the chief northern families, the Comyns, the Bruces, and the Balliols, had been decisively transferred to Scotland. The forfeitures of the Balliol estates at Barnard Castle in 1296 and of the Bruce manors of Hart and Hartnesse - including the port of Hartlepool - some ten years later[1] merely put a final stop to the interest of these families in their Durham estates, an interest, which, however, had /

[1] Lapsley, op. cit., p. 42. The question of who had the right to these forfeitures, the king against whom the treason of Bruces and Balliols was directed, or the bishop whose palatine jurisdiction included the estates in question, exercised legal minds for some centuries. Lapsley has traced the developments of the case, which need not concern us here.

had been fading for some time in the face of their increasing Scottish commitments. Among supporters of the Bruces and Balliols who forfeited their estates at this time were John Percy, who lost the manor of Whitlaw in Durham, Amerik Howden, who lost Berrington and Ryley in Norhamshire, Walter Fitz-James, who forfeited Buckton and Goswyk in Islandshire and John Selby, who lost the manor of Fellyng in Durham.[1]

The political vacuum which followed the removal of these powerful influences was filled in the course of the 14th century mainly by the rising families of Percy, Neville and Clifford. Significantly enough, the manors of Hart and Hartnesse, forfeited by the Bruces, were granted by Edward I to Robert de Clifford.[2] In 1309 Henry de Percy of the Yorkshire family of Percy of Leconfield and Topcliffe purchased the barony of Alnwick and its dependent manors from Bishop Bek: it had once belonged to the family of Vesci.[3] By 1332 the Percies had also received the barony of Warkworth on the death of John de Clavering; some years later they succeeded by marriage to the Comyn lands in Tynedale, and in the same way to the Umfraville barony of Prudhoe with its dependent manors.[4] In 1377 Henry, Lord Percy was created earl of Northumberland,[5] and from this point onwards, as well as being the leading /

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1 Ibid., p. 43. These forfeitures were made to the bishop.
2 Ibid.
3 Percy Bailiff's Rolls of the 15th Century (S.S. cxxxiv) p. ix; Percy Chartulary (S.S. cxvii) p. 241.
4 Percy Bailiff's Rolls, pp. ix-xii.
5 G.E.C., op. cit., vi, p. 230.

leading family in Northumberland, the Percies held a position of great - sometimes primary - importance in the central government.

The Westmorland family of Clifford had a slower rise to power during the later middle ages. Hereditary sheriffs of Westmorland since 1291, they were granted the manor of Skelton in Cumberland, and Skipton Castle in Yorkshire by Edward I. Throughout the 14th and 15th centuries they held important official positions in the north, especially as wardens of the marches, but it was not until 1525 that Henry, Lord Clifford, received the title of earl of Cumberland.[1]

The Nevilles of Raby in the palatinate, on the other hand, received the earldom of Westmorland in 1397 only twenty years after the Percies achieved the title of Northumberland. At the time of his elevation to the peerage Ralph Neville was lord of Raby and Brancepeth in Durham, of Bywell, Bolbeck and Mitford in Northumberland, of Penrith in Cumberland and of Middleham and Sheriffhutton in Yorkshire.[2] These lordships formed the core of the Neville estates in the north. The first earl of Westmorland married twice. His eldest son by his first marriage - with Margaret of Stafford - naturally succeeded to the earldom and to his Durham estates. His eldest son by his second marriage - with Joan Beaufort - was born in 1399 and in 1425 was married to Alice, the only /

[1] Ibid., iii, pp. 290-295.
[2] Dugdale, op. cit., i, pp. 291-2.

only child of Thomas Montacute, earl of Salisbury; on the death of his father-in-law in 1428, he succeeded to the earldom of Salisbury. It was the eldest son, Richard, of this earl of Salisbury who was to succeed by marriage to the earldom of Warwick and become the most powerful nobleman in England during the Wars of the Roses.[1] Thus if the younger branch of the house of Neville pursued the more spectacular course in the 15th century, it was doomed to end in disaster with the Yorkist victory and the death of Warwick at Barnet. Nevertheless, it was with Richard, earl of Warwick, that the house of Neville reached the peak of its power in the later middle ages.

Thereafter the great rival of Neville, the house of Percy, recovering from its eclipse after the unsuccessful rebellion of the earl of Northumberland (1403-1408) and the defeat of the houses of Lancaster and Percy in alliance by the Yorkists at the battle of Towton, played the leading part under Richard, duke of Gloucester, in pacifying the north after the victory of the house of York at Barnet and Tewkesbury.[2] But the very fact that Northumberland was subordinate to Gloucester indicated the change in the sources of power which was taking place. In the absence of the two nobles, members of their councils carried on the government of the north; while Richard of Gloucester's own council was developing some of the characteristics of the ultimate Tudor solution of the northern /

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[1] The succession of the Neville estates is summed up in C. W. Oman, Warwick the Kingmaker, pp. 14-28; see also Dugdale, op. cit., i, pp. 287-301.

[2] Reid, op. cit., pp. 41-46.

northern political problem, the Council in the North.[1] The effective local power of the Percies was gradually declining in face of growing royal power and our period closes at the point at which the sixth earl of Northumberland bequeathed his estates to the crown.[2]

The power of the Nevilles, whose chief representative, Warwick, died on the losing side in 1461, was, if not on the decline, at any rate not employed very actively under the exceedingly long-lived second and third earls of Westmorland.[3] During the first two Tudor reigns they played less part in politics than did the Percies, and the third earl did not take sides at all during the rising known as the Pilgrimage of Grace in 1536.[4]

As in the rest of the country, the chief instruments of the Tudor policy in the north were the country gentry and the embryo middle class. They were the more valuable in that the government did not have to force them into the offices of local government in face of aristocratic opposition. For already in the earlier and middle 15th century the chief families had been passively acquiescing in the tendency of the gentry to take over the practical administration of local government. The pill was sweetened by the fact that many of the lesser gentry were collected into the political and /

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1 Ibid.

2 See below, p. 86.

3 Both called Ralph; the second earl held the title from 1436 to 1485; the third from 1485 till 1549. (Dugdale, op. cit., i, pp. 299-301.)

4 Dodds, op. cit., i, p. 204.

and social retinues of the nobles. As we have just seen, the private councils of Gloucester and Northumberland virtually governed the north in the absence of their principals.[1]

One of the points which I hope will emerge from this very brief survey of the development of the chief family powers in the north during our period is that in proportion as their power grew, so did their interest and involvement in national politics and in issues much wider than those which had occupied their ancestors in their border wars.

Between them, the families of Percy, Neville and Clifford had collected into their hands the largest non-royal and non-palatinate estates in the north.[2] Around them as leaders the lesser families tended to group. While these processes were working themselves out, however, members of the families of Neville and Percy were also acquiring political power and honours in London,[3] so that their attention became increasingly divided between their northern estates and duties and their political schemes at court. After they had supported Henry IV in the revolution which placed him on the throne, their influence at Westminster was very considerable.[4]

It was this influence and the interests which they developed in /

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1 Cf. Reid, op. cit., pp. 44-45.

2 It is possible to omit the palatine duchy of Lancaster from our discussion, although it was one of the greatest northern estates. It was an appanage of the royal family.

3 Tout, op. cit., iii, 434. Steel, op. cit., 240.

4 See above p. 60, n. 2; the earl of Northumberland received many favours at court between 1383 and 1390. (Ibid., 93-94.)

in the affairs of the central government which took the nobles' attention from the day to day problems of governing the north, of combating the bandits and of defending the country against the Scots.

There was another distraction for the nobles, however, in the contests between the families for local supremacy, for land, and eventually for control of the crown. The main rivalry in the north was naturally between the Nevilles and the Percies. The power of the Cliffords, as we have seen, developed late; while the holders of the Lancaster estates were in a special position - they were members of the royal house until 1399: thereafter they were the kings themselves. Incidentally, it is worth while to remember that the noble who held the most land in the northern counties - after the duke of Lancaster - was the palatine bishop of Durham, and that this post was held by George Neville, cousin of the earl of Westmorland, from 1438 to 1457.[1]

The struggles between the families naturally became increasingly directed towards raising some particular family to the throne, and, indeed, they merged almost imperceptibly into the Wars of the Roses. But in origin they were largely economic, and formed part of the increasingly difficult job of making the aristocratic ends meet. In the later middle ages it was more obvious than it had ever been at the height of the feudal period that political power rested on economic prosperity. In the earlier middle ages a magnate's power depended /

[1] F.D., p. 150.

depended in the last resort on the number of knights and men of arms who were bound to follow him to war, and this was directly bound up with the amount of land he had at his disposal for distribution to them. In our period the nobleman's power was in proportion to the size of his military retinue and civil clientele.[1] This depended not only upon the economic resources of his territorial possessions, but also upon his other sources of income (of which one of the most important was the ransom of his wealthy "prisoners of war") and upon the amount of influence which he could bring to bear on his clients' behalf at court, in the law courts, and in the localities generally. Livery and maintenance, in fact, were rearing their ugly heads.

The struggle for land was very largely responsible for determining the course of action of the house of Neville during the Wars of the Roses. The bone of contention was the bulk of the Yorkshire estates of the Nevilles around Middleham and Sheriffhutton, which Ralph, the first earl of Westmorland, left not to his successor in the title but to his second wife, Joan of Beaufort and their children /

[1] A full development of this theme would, of course, involve a detailed investigation of the whole subject of "bastard feudalism", which is hardly possible here. Attempts to elucidate this problem are made by, inter alia, K. B. McFarlane, Parliament and Bastard Feudalism (T.R.H.S. Ser. 4, xxvi, 1944, pp. 53-79); Bastard Feudalism (B.I.H.R., xx, 1943-45, pp. 161-180); and N. B. Lewis, The organization of indentured retinues in 14th century England (T.R.H.S. Ser. 4, xxvii, 1945, pp. 29-39.)

children. These estates thus descended by Richard, earl of Salisbury, to Warwick the Kingmaker and eventually to Richard, duke of Gloucester, after the battle of Barnet. By the mid-fourteen thirties Ralph, the second earl of Westmorland, had married the sister of the earl of Northumberland - the old rival of the Nevilles - and a local war developed in Yorkshire between the northern and southern branches of the family.[1] When the Wars of the Roses came, and Warwick became the main supporter of the Yorkists, both Westmorland and Northumberland, and most of the north of England, remained faithful to the house of Lancaster.[2]

The second aristocratic source of income which has been mentioned, ransoms, was at the root of the quarrel between the houses of Percy and Neville in 1403, when neither would concede the other's claims to the ransomable Scots prisoners captured at the battle of Homildon Hill.[3] The king made matters worse by refusing to allow the Percies to ransom their prisoners - especially the earl of Douglas, demanding that this captive should be surrendered to the crown.[4] This refusal was the immediate cause of the great Percy rebellion which began in 1403, was not finally quelled till five years later, and came near to destroying the /

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1 The story is told in Oman, op. cit., pp. 24-26.

2 After the battle of Towton (1461), for example, money was loaned to Queen Margaret by the Prior and Convent of Durham. (Priory of Hexham, i (S.S. xliv) App., pp. cii-ciii.

3 Wylie: Henry IV, i, p. 337.

4 K. B. McFarlane, Yorkists and Lancastrians (C.M.H., viii), p. 364.

the Lancastrian government.

Profits from ransoms obtained in the course of the border wars were all the more necessary to the border families since the wardenships of the marches - towards Wales as well as towards Scotland[1] - were in themselves a source of loss rather than of gain. Salaries and expenses paid by the crown rarely covered the financial outlay that the duties of the offices entailed.[2] The dukes of Lancaster and the Nevilles, Percies and Cliffords may have had a monopoly of the patronage in lands and offices,[3] but the offices could become a positive liability if they were not accompanied by salaries or other remuneration for the officials, and in general it seems that the important wardenships of the marches were exceedingly unpopular.[4] Moreover, as the king intensified his insistence upon his right to rule all of the nation, it /

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1 Stubbs, Constitutional Hist., iii, p. 35.

2 Very likely this had much to do with the insufficiency of the border defences complained of in the 1397 Parliament. (Rot. Parl., iii, p. 339.)

3 Reid, op. cit., p. 16.

4 In 1384 Sir John Neville, the Warden of the Eastern March, had to restore the defences of Bamborough at his own expense. (N.C.H., i, p. 42.) In 1414 Henry V's brother, the duke of Bedford, after making repeated appeals to the government for funds, went to the length of resigning the Wardenship of the Eastern March because the wages of his men could not be paid. (Wylie, Henry V, i, p. 327.) A century later the earl of Northumberland was very reluctant to take on the duties of Warden General of the Marches. (E. B. de Fonblanque, Annals of the House of Percy, i, p. 386.) Compare the list of salaries payable by the warden. (Ibid., pp. 554-556.)

it was only reasonable to expect that his government would meet the cost of defending the national frontiers. But, on account of the inability of the royal financial administration to keep in step with the country's economic development,[1] this was exactly what the government could not do. As one result of this we see Henry IV entering into competition with the Percies for the ransom of a captive Scottish nobleman; the monarchy taking one more step towards ranking itself with the larger aristocratic houses - towards the situation which produced the Wars of the Roses.[2]

These inter-family struggles over land and ransoms were of course fought out by lawyers and courtiers in London as well as by armies in the country. The litigiousness of the later mediaeval landowners, "engaged in transforming feudal landholdings into estates which could be more freely transferred and inherited" is fairly well attested;[3] while the reigns of Richard II, Henry IV and Henry VI were rarely free from some aristocratic intrigue aimed at /

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1 "It was not the national wealth which was exhausted, but that small fraction of it upon which the king could lay his hands." (McFarlane, loc. cit.) That some feeling existed that the government's wickedness or inefficiency was endangering private rights, is suggested by the indictment of Henry IV's tyrannical administration which was included among the charges of the Percy rebels in 1403. (Fonblanque, op. cit., i, pp. 529-531.)

2 That the issues could be conveniently confused is shown by the fact that the lords in parliament avoided condemning the earl of Northumberland for treason by contending that his only trespass was against the Nevilles, (McFarlane, op. cit., p. 367.) It should be remembered, of course, that Northumberland was not present when his son, Hotspur, fought the royal army at Shrewsbury.

3 Margaret Hastings: The Court of Common Pleas in fifteenth century England. Ithaca, New York, 1947, p. 237.

at increasing the power of some party in the governing circles.[1]

And the more absorbed the higher aristocracy became in their internecine strife and their London interests, the more necessary it became for them to delegate the day to day governance of the north to the lesser nobility and gentry. To some extent it was no doubt a very suitable "division of labour." While the Nevilles and Percies tried to increase their power at the centre, their retainers among the gentry, whose fortunes were largely bound up with those of their "good lords", looked after the question of local government. The gentry, although, of course, represented in parliament,[2] had before the mid-15th century been politically unimportant, for they ranged themselves in the retinues of the nobles and took their political cues from their leaders.[3] To use somewhat anachronistic modern terms, they voted in the Commons as their patrons did in the Lords. But in the localities the direction of administration, if not of political decision, gradually came into their hands,[4] and it stayed there, whether the political rulers /

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[1] It seems unnecessary to labour this point, sufficient examples are to be found in most histories of the period, e.g. Stubbs, Steel, Wylie.

[2] Even the gentry whose chief estates lay in the palatinate of Durham sometimes went to parliament to represent groups of "knights of the shire" of Northumberland. (Members of parliament for Northumberland. (A.A., 4th Ser., xii, p. 83.)

[3] This applied to the English gentry in general (McFarlane, op.cit., p. 405), although in the south the gentry showed a certain independence, especially on the question of parliamentary elections. (McFarlane, Parliament and bastard feudalism (T.R.H.S., 4th Ser., xxvi) pp. 56-63.)

[4] Under the Tudors, even the wardenships of the marches were sometimes held by middle class gentry. (Reid, op.cit., p. 92; Dodds, op.cit., ii, p. 103.)

rulers were the local magnates, or - as happened frequently under Edward IV and the Tudors, southern nobles such as the dukes of Gloucester and Norfolk. The effect of these developments in slowly changing the political direction in the north became apparent when the gentry led the Pilgrimage of Grace and the nobles remained inactive.[1]

While the power of the lesser landowners was thus increasing, changes were also taking place in the machinery through which the northern counties were governed. From the end of the Wars of the Roses these changes were more or less consciously engineered by the royal government in order to ensure that whoever did administer the country would do so as servants of the crown and not of private magnates. As early as the 14th century, however, sporadic efforts towards this end were being made by the kings, some of which were linked with attempts to solve the problems presented by the existence of the franchises and sanctuaries.

In 1346 a commission which conferred the Wardenship of the East March jointly upon the archbishop of York and the bishop of Durham placed under their jurisdiction the liberties of Norhamshire, Bedlington, Hexham, Durham, Tynedale and Redesdale along with the rest /

[1] Junior members of the Percy and Neville families played a prominent part in the rising, but the earls of Northumberland and Westmorland were passive and all the Cliffords remained loyal. (Dodds, op. cit., i, pp. 199, 237; ii, p. 6.)

rest of Northumberland.[1] During most of our period the king had also some indirect control over the bishopric and palatinate of Durham, since to all intents and purposes it was he who appointed the bishop.[2] Nevertheless, there was more than a hint of pressure from some of the local nobility before the election of Bishop Beaumont in 1317;[3] while, during the Wars of the Roses, the bishops of Durham fell into line with the majority of the northern families in supporting the house of Lancaster.[4]

The outcome showed them to have backed the wrong horse, and the Percies had incurred especially heavy losses.[5] On the other hand the monarchy's gain - both the Yorkist's and the Tudor's - was considerable. When the forfeiture of the Percies was annulled and they returned to take a prominent place in northern politics they did so only as seconds in command to the duke of Gloucester, Edward IV's brother: the king, in fact, was no longer prepared to leave the northern nobility without any superior nearer than Westminster, and the situation at the time gave him an excellent excuse for not doing so. At first Richard of Gloucester's power as Lieutenant /

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1 Reid, op. cit., p. 25. It should be remembered, however, that Durham county, Norhamshire, Bedlingtonshire and Hexhamshire were liberties of the Bishop of Durham and the Archbishop of York; while effective control over the franchises of Tynedale and Redesdale was impossible.

2 E.g. S.S. cxix, pp. 1-9; cf. Hamilton Thompson, The English clergy, pp. 17-18.

3 Script. Tres (S.S. ix), p. 95.

4 Lapsley, op. cit., p. 230.

5 The earldom of Northumberland was forfeited and granted to Warwick's brother, John Neville. (Fonblanque, op. cit., i, p. 288, n. 1.)

Lieutenant of the North did not extend north of Yorkshire, although he was technically governor of all England "north of the Trent." It was not made effective north of the Tees until 1482, when as a result of the war with Scotland he received full authority aided by a personal council of advisers such as most mediaeval magnates possessed.[1]

The story of how this slight advance on the seignorial council developed into the King's Council in the North has been fully set out by Miss Rachel Reid.[2] The original council, which had acted merely as an advisory body to the lieutenant, lapsed in 1509. Before this the jurisdiction of the lieutenant had extended over Yorkshire, but not normally over the marches[3] and the palatinate of Durham. When the council was revived in 1525, its function was to aid the king's illegitimate son, the duke of Richmond, to govern both Yorkshire and the marches, but the latter area reverted to its former independence in 1527. Three years later the decisive step was taken of severing the connection between the council and the lieutenant so that its members were no longer merely his personal advisers. It was reconstituted under a royally appointed president as an offshoot of the privy council, the most potent organ of government in the Tudor state. In 1537, after the Pilgrimage of Grace, its sphere of jurisdiction was extended to cover the whole of England north of the Trent, including all liberties, palatinates and /

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[1] Reid, op. cit., p. 51.

[2] Ibid., pp. 101-113; 316.

[3] Map no. 2 gives the layout of the marches.

and the marches. Thus the government of the north, while remaining a separate entity, was brought directly under the crown by means of the Tudor privy council.

Henceforth the council could remove cases from the courts of the palatinate of Durham,[1] which could itself be entered freely by royal officials. And as for the marches, the warden general and his deputies were appointed by the council, which was able to control them on the spot as no London government could. Almost simultaneously, acts of parliament abolished on a national scale the most dangerous of the privileges of sanctuary.[2]

The Tudor success in enclosing all the northern palatinates, the family liberties and the semi-franchisal offices within the envelope of the council was, of course, partly the result of causes operating outside the scope of the king's immediate policy. The preoccupations of the great families have already been noted.[3] Their quarrels culminated in 1535 when the great house of Percy divided against itself and the sixth earl of Northumberland bequeathed his estates to the king,[4] partly as an alternative to leaving /

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[1] Lapsley, op. cit., p. 263.

[2] In 1534 treason was exempted from the privilege of sanctuary. (Statutes of the Realm, 25 Henry VIII, c. 22, 7; 26 Henry VIII, c. 13.) In 1536 the sanctuary rights of lay palatinates were abolished. (Ibid., 27 Henry VIII, c. 24.) In 1540 all serious felonies were exempted and all sanctuaries save churches and churchyards abolished. (Ibid., 32 Henry VIII, c. 12.) At the same time all the liberties and franchises of the dissolved monasteries were vested in the Crown. (Ibid., c. 20; cf. Thornley, op. cit., p. 203.)

[3] See above, pp. 76-77.

[4] Dodds, op. cit., i, p. 33; Reid, op. cit., p. 120.

leaving them to his brother Thomas, whom he disliked, and partly it may be, on account of the financial straits to which the earldom was reduced.[1] The adaptable commissions of the peace, which had been one of the official means whereby the magnates ruled the north,[2] were granted in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth century rather to southern nobles as lieutenants[3] or to the local country gentry, who, even if they remained retainers of the earl of Northumberland or the duke of Gloucester,[4] nevertheless received their commissions directly from the crown. Lastly, the dissolution of the lesser monasteries in 1536, although its social and economic effects were, of course, not fully apparent until after our period, did dispose at once of some of the more persistent sanctuaries. Moreover, it touched off a religious and social revolution which called forth a royal army to suppress it - the first royal army in the north which was neither directed against the Scots nor under the command of a northern magnate. There had been a revolt and it was the duke of Norfolk's duty to punish the rebels.[5] Of the nobles, the earl of Northumberland lay ill at his castle of Wressle in Yorkshire;[6] while the earl of Westmorland took no part in the rising[7] and Cumberland was loyal /

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1 Cf. the list of the earl's private debts. (Fonblanque, op. cit., i, app. lvi.)
2 Reid, op. cit., p. 40.
3 Ibid., p. 42.
4 For the composition of Gloucester's council see ibid., p. 44.
5 Dodds, op. cit., ii, pp. 99-100.
6 He died on June 29, 1537. (Fonblanque, op. cit., i, p. 476.)
7 Dodds, op. cit., i, p. 204.

loyal.[1] The gentry who - often unwillingly[2] - had led the rising were now so afraid of losing their property in a full-scale peasant revolt that they were only too willing to help Norfolk;[3] and the sanctuary men who had formed the aggressive core of many of the rebel armies had far fewer sanctuaries since the dissolution.[4] In fact a combination of circumstances had paralysed the mediaeval structure of liberties, privileges and rights, which had for centuries been the basis of northern separatism. Henry VIII was not slow to take full advantage of the situation, and in 1537 the King's Council of the North was given its final form with Cuthbert Tunstall, bishop and lord palatine of Durham, as its president.[5]

With the establishment of this council, the elimination of the sanctuaries, the decline in the political power of the magnates and the dissolution of the monasteries, the political development of northern England during the later middle ages may be said to have reached its culmination. The council remained the effective government of northern England for over a century,[6] substituting government /

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1 Ibid., ii, p. 6.

2 George Lumley, one of the east Yorkshire leaders, took the first opportunity of resigning his command and returning home. (Ibid., ii, pp. 66-71.)

3 Ibid., ii, p. 105.

4 Norfolk, however, found himself unable to do more than come to terms with the men of Tynedale. (Ibid., ii, pp. 237-238.)

5 Lapsley, op. cit., p. 262. Tunstall had already been president of the council set up in 1530, the jurisdiction of which did not cover Durham and the Marches. (Reid, op. cit., p. 113.)

6 It was abolished by the Act of 1641 which prohibited the continuance of the courts which exercised "Star Chamber jurisdiction." (S. R. Gardiner: Constitutional documents of the Puritan Revolution, 3rd ed. rev., 1936, p. 186.)

government by the king's law - the equity of the Star Chamber - for the rule of the customary local and common law of the marches[1] and palatinates.

Thus even if the north remained a separate problem after 1540, the methods of dealing with it had been altered to conform to the standard Tudor methods of governing all of the country. Even if society, both secular and religious, remained much as it has been described in the earlier part of this chapter, its top governing layers had been directly subordinated to the crown; no lords palatine, no quasi-regal magnates, no pope, could intervene. Even if the danger of invasions from Scotland continued to harass the farmers of the northern counties, religious and political revolution north of the border, combined with Queen Elizabeth's aversion to consorts, would soon create the conditions necessary for the Union of the Crowns, with inevitable although gradual easing of the border tension.

Perhaps this tension was the most characteristic feature of northern English life, both social and political, during the later middle ages. It was by no means entirely - perhaps not even mainly - due to the proximity of a usually hostile state. The outlaw dalesmen south of the border were an even more continuous menace, and it was very difficult to distinguish foreign invasion from domestic lawlessness. One of Scotland's most permanent contributions to /

[1] The courts of the marches which collaborated with the Scots for the attempted preservation of law and order were retained.

to the disturbed state of the English marches was the "sanctuary" which she provided for law-breakers and - especially in the period of the Reformation - for political and religious refugees who succeeded in crossing the border.[1]

It is true, of course, that the two hundred years preceding the Reformation were an "age of anxiety" in most parts of England. But the north was characterised by the unremitting continuity of its "state of emergency" resulting from the permanent refuges provided for its outlaws by the many independent franchises and sanctuaries. In this respect it constituted a special area and a special problem.

[1] Bishop Tunstall's chaplain, Richard Hildyard, an opponent of the dissolution, fled to Scotland. (Letters and papers of the reign of Henry VIII, xv, pp. 12-13.)

CHAPTER THREE

THE ECCLESIASTICAL BACKGROUND

Part 1. The diocese of Durham.

Perhaps the most striking fact about the bishopric of Durham is the magnitude of its political and ecclesiastical importance and of the revenues which it brought to its bishop, in spite of its isolated and marginal position both in the kingdom of England and in the Roman church in general. England, was, of course, unique in Western Christendom for the size and wealth of its dioceses;[1] Lincoln and York, of 7,265 and 8,149 square miles respectively /

[1] See Hughes, Reformation in England, i, p. 31, for a note of the assessments of the English sees for papal taxation and a comparison with the much smaller figures for Italian bishoprics. The figures are taken from the valuations in Eubel, Hierarchia Catholica Medii Aevi, i, which also shows that Winchester, taxed at 12000fl., was regarded at the curia as the richest see in Europe. The great German sees of Salzburg, Cologne and Trier reached only 10,000 fl. Durham on this valuation stood at 9000 fl., more than the see of Liège (7200 fl). It should be remembered, of course, that the assessment for papal taxation was only a very rough guide to the value of a see, or for that matter any other benefice. It almost invariably underestimated the real value; and it was, of course, in the interest of the incumbent that it should. (Cf. Graham, Taxation of Nicholas IV (E.H.R. xxiii) passim.) Stubbs in his Constitutional history, vol. ii, facing p. 576, prints a table giving the valuations of the English sees in 1291 based on the figures in Pope Nicholas's assessment. The most interesting feature, from our point of view, is the large part of the total temporal value of Durham diocese which comes from the bishop's own temporals: £2,666:13:4 out of £4,193:5:6 (Old Taxation); £666:13:4 out of £936:13:4 (New Taxation). This is a result of the bishop of Durham's great palatinate resources. The corresponding figures for the sees of York and Winchester are, for York: £1,333:6:8 out of £8,718:9:11 (Old Taxation), £666:13:4 out of £4,953:17:10, (New Taxation); for Winchester: £2,977:15:10 out of £5,689:14:7¾.

respectively, were among the largest dioceses, and Winchester, taxed at 12,000 fl., was the most lucrative bishopric, in Europe.[1] The archbishoprics of Canterbury and York were each taxed at 10,000 fl., and within the English church Durham followed immediately at 9,000 fl.

Financially, as well as in the political sphere, the importance of the bishopric of Durham was mainly due to the palatinate and the wealth and jurisdiction which went with it. From the table which Stubbs compiled from the Taxation of Pope Nicholas (1291), it is obvious that, while the spiritual and temporal values of the diocese as a whole (£6,723:19:3¼ and £4,193:5:6) fall short of those of Lincoln, Norwich, Salisbury, Winchester, and York, the temporals of the bishop of Durham himself - mainly derived from the palatinate - total £2,666:13:4, which is only a little over £300 less than Winchester's £2,977:15:10, the largest figure for episcopal temporals in England. The temporals of the bishop of Ely, valued at £2,000 were the third largest in the English church; Canterbury came fourth (£1,355:8:1) and York fifth (£1,333:6:8).[2]

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[1] Hughes, op.cit., p. 32, and the sources cited above.

[2] Stubbs, Loc.cit. The figures cited are those on the traditional 13th century assessment; the reduction in the value of a good deal of church property in the north of England which resulted from Edward I's war with Scotland, led to a new assessment in the northern province under the succeeding king, which substantially reduced the liability to taxation of the dioceses of York, Durham and Carlisle (the figures for the temporals of Durham and York are given in note 1, on the preceding page); the churches in Northumberland were not taxed at all. (See below, vol. 2, passim.)

The wealth of the bishopric of Durham had the result of making it a very worth-while prize for ambitious ecclesiastics. Thus the king, whose influence was usually paramount in influencing the appointments made to the see, had always a wide range of candidates from among whom he might choose his ecclesiastical, and frequently temporal, ruler of the far north of England. Not that there was any lack of applicants for all the bishoprics in England during the later middle ages, but Durham remained something special, to which Edward III and Henry VII could appoint respectively their highest government officials such as Bury and Fox, while Wolsey himself held the see at the height of his power (1523 - 1529).

So much for Durham's pecuniary advantages for the would-be bishop. For ecclesiastics of lower rank the attractions of the benefices available in Durham were on the whole not so pre-eminent among the offices of the English church. Without complicated and laborious calculations from figures in the various assessments of the period - calculations which would be out of place in the present rough sketch - it is difficult to compare with any precision the values of benefices in Durham with those in other dioceses. If, however, we may assume that the bulk of the temporal possessions of the church were in the hands of the episcopate and the religious houses, and that, on the other hand, a fair amount of the spirituality - revenues from tithes, offerings, marriage dues, etc. - went to the parish clergy, the spirituals listed for each diocese in Bishop Stubbs's previously cited table might be taken as a basis for /

for an approximate comparison. (York is chosen as the nearest large diocese to Durham, Worcester as representative of a smallish diocese with no special distinguishing features, Canterbury as the primatial diocese situated in the richest part of England, Winchester as the see of the wealthiest English bishop, and Exeter as the diocese which most resembled Durham in its remoteness, but not in its frontier turbulence.)

Diocese	Area in square miles	Number of Parishes	Average area of Parishes in square miles	Valuation of spirituals in 1291. (To the nearest £)	Average value of spirituals per square mile. (To the nearest shilling)
Durham	2,998	108	27.8	£6,724	£2: 5:0
York	8,149	694	11.8	£18,817	£2: 6:0
Worcester	2,456	409	6	£4,816	£2: 0:0
Canterbury	1,010	239	4.2	£4,773	£4:14:0
Winchester	2,181	339	6.4	£6,585	£3: 0:0
Exeter	3,955	521	7.6	£4,602	£1: 4:0

It must be stressed again that these figures, obtained directly or by calculation from the tables already cited in Stubbs and Hughes, are intended to do no more than provide a rough basis for comparison by which the diocese of Durham may be set in its place /

place within the framework of Ecclesia Anglicana.[1] The figures in column five merely indicate, very approximately, what an average square mile of territory in each of these six dioceses was worth in terms of ecclesiastical spiritualities, some of which would go to the parish priest, nearly all, perhaps, if he were rector, a very small part, perhaps, if he were the vicar acting for an appropriating religious house. Some of this spirituality, however, would consist of free-will offerings made to religious houses. On the other hand, some of the income of the parish clergy was certainly a product of their temporal possessions of lands and services, and is thus unaccounted for in our figures.

In spite of its obvious defects, however, this table indicates that in 1291 the clergy in the diocese of Durham possessed sources of income which were at least the equal of those in all but the wealthiest southern dioceses. It shows that it is necessary to examine the facts with some care before making the common assertion that /

[1] Specifically, it should be noted that the area and number of parishes in the case of York, refer to the diocese as it stood in 1540, exclusive of the archdeaconry of Richmond. The 1291 valuation of the diocese, on the other hand, included the archdeaconry; thus the sum in column five should probably be slightly less than the £2:6:0 calculated from these figures. Also the figure of 108 for the number of parishes in the diocese of Durham has been retained unmodified for purposes of comparison with the other figures in column two, all of which come from Hughes and refer to the situation in 1540. In fact the number of independent parishes in the diocese of Durham fluctuated between 119 and 115 during our period. (See below, p. 170.)

that the clergy in Durham were necessarily less well-off than their colleagues to the south of them. This does not seem to have been true in the 13th century, if the figures in the 1291 valuation reflect the situation with moderate accuracy. At that time, however, the diocese was not suffering from the savage destruction of a protracted war. The wars with Scotland which lasted on and off throughout the two centuries prior to the Reformation greatly reduced the value of Durham church property. We have already seen that the churches of Northumberland were not valued for taxation in the reign of Edward II; presumably because the officials considered - or were persuaded by a sufficiency of evidence - that such taxation would impose too great a strain on the reduced resources of their incumbents, and also that the proceeds would not amount to a worth while sum. When, in the Valor Ecclesiasticus of 1535, we once more have a complete valuation, we find - to quote a few examples - that the rectory of Ingram, valued at £53:6:8 in 1291, was worth £24:16:5 net; Ford had dropped from £86:13:4 to £24; Ilderton from £20 to £4.[1] In county Durham, the reduction in valuation was less catastrophic; admittedly the rectory of Wolsingham dropped from £40 in 1291 to £20 in 1535, but Elwick fell by less than £6 - from £26:13:4 to £20:18:0 net; while the valuation of the rectory of Ryton actually rose /

[1] These figures, and the ones which follow, are taken from the Taxation of Pope Nicholas and the Valor Ecclesiasticus; the values of the parish churches are, of course, recorded below, vol. 2, passim.

rose during the period from £40 to £42:10:8 net.[1] The assessments of the larger ecclesiastical corporations showed, however, a considerable decline, and the convent of Durham's income from spirituals, standing at £620 in the valuation of 1291, was £496:5:10 in 1535. In the far south of the diocese, on the other hand, the monetary value of the small nunnery of Neasham on the Tees rose slightly from £19 in 1291 to £20:17:7 net in 1535. There was, indeed, no standard rate of decline in the value of the diocesan churches, but the overall picture of a general and very considerable fall in actual value - even if in some cases not in purely monetary terms - is unmistakable. The only other generalisation which may be made is that this decline was especially sharp in the northern and western regions of the diocese, which were extremely exposed to the risks of war; while in the south and east of county Durham and at the mouth of the River Tyne conditions were on the whole more stable.

It should be remembered, moreover, that a very great deal of such poverty as existed among the Durham clergy was the result not so much of an overall lack of revenue as of an excessively disproportionate distribution of what there was. The bishop, the monasteries, and the wealthiest of the collegiate churches took most of the goods of the church of Durham; the unluckiest parish priests /

[1] Any conclusions drawn from a comparison of church valuations in 1291 with those of 1535 must, of course, take into account the fall in the value of money during the 15th and 16th centuries, which resulted from a series of currency debasements. A purely monetary comparison tends to underrate considerably the decline in the value of the benefices. (Bindoff, Tudor England, pp. 118-119.)

priests got practically nothing. One of the most striking features of the parochial structure in the diocese is the number - about 60 per cent - of the parish churches which were appropriated to various religious bodies,[1] so that their rectorial dues were paid to the appropriators, and the cures were served by vicars who received a stipend which was to a large extent fixed by the generosity or otherwise of their employers. The revenues of the appropriated churches must not, in fact, be regarded as part of the income of the parish clergy, but rather of the wealth of the religious houses. Moreover, the priory of Durham and its cells accounted for over a third of the appropriations. The system of appropriation was largely responsible for the direction of ecclesiastical wealth into the coffers of the prior and convent. There was, of course, another reason for the economic inequalities in the Durham church: namely, the huge territorial possessions of the bishop and his monastic chapter, many of which dated from pre-Norman donations to the church of St. Cuthbert. Thus both in the control which they enjoyed over the spirituality of the diocese and also in their possession of the bulk of its temporality, the bishop and the convent reigned supreme, to the financial detriment of the lower ranks of the clergy.

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[1] The figure for the diocese of York, which contained some of the largest Cistercian monasteries in the kingdom - Rievaulx, Fountains, Jervaulx - not to mention the great Benedictine house of St. Mary, York, was a little over 50 per cent. (Calculated from Valor Ecclesiasticus.) In the county of York 63 per cent and in the county of Lincoln a little under 50 per cent of churches were appropriated. (Hamilton Thompson, English clergy, p. 115.)

The revenues of the parish churches themselves, consisting very largely of the proceeds of the parson's glebe and of the tithes, were more or less in proportion to the value of the produce of the land on which they were situated. For the most part this remained true during the whole of the middle ages, although modifications would have to be made to the statement insofar as it applied to some of the coastal and riverside areas where a certain amount of trade and industry was practised.[1]

Before the wars against Scotland began, the total parish revenues in the archdeaconry of Northumberland were about twice as large as those of the southern archdeaconry - roughly £4,000 as against £2,000.[2] Territorially the proportion was just, since Northumberland was about twice the area of Durham. To some extent, but by no means invariably, the values of parishes at this period especially in Northumberland bore a similar relationship to their territorial area. Thus most of the really valuable benefices of the diocese were situated in the northern archdeaconry: the following table lists those parishes in the diocese the rectories of which were valued at over fifty pounds.[3]

Archdeaconry /

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[1] See above, pp. 11-15.

[2] Taxation of Pope Nicholas. The figure for Durham is exclusive of the value of prebends in the collegiate churches.

[3] Ibid.; again the prebends of the collegiate churches are omitted.

Archdeaconry of Durham

Deanery of Durham

Sedgefield	£113: 6: 8	Houghton-le-Spring	£86:13: 4
Bishop Wearmouth	£100: 0: 0	Brancepeth	£53: 6: 8

Deanery of Darlington

Haughton-le-Skerne	£113: 6: 8	Staindrop	£93: 6: 8
Gainford	£100: 0: 0	Hurworth	£54: 0: 0

Archdeaconry of Northumberland

Deanery of Newcastle

Newcastle	£96:18: 4	Tynemouth	£71:12:10
Stamfordham	£89: 8: 6	Hartburn	£67:18: 8
Woodhorn	£75: 1: 8	Newburn	£62: 0: 0
	Stannington £53:2:4½		

Deanery of Corbridge

Simonburn	£136: 4: 2	Chollerton	£77:17: 6
Norham	£133: 6: 8	Corbridge	£75: 0: 0
Ovingham	£96: 4:10¼	Haltwhistle	£61: 6: 8
Elsdon	£90:16: 5	Warden	£54: 2: 5

Deanery of Alnwick

Rothbury	£133: 6: 8	Eglingham	£74: 6: 8
Embleton	£120: 0: 0	Alwinton	£66:13: 4
Warkworth	£80: 0: 0	Ingram	£53: 6: 8
	Whittingham £50:0:0		

Deanery of Bamborough

Holy Island and Islandshire[1]	£230:15: 0	Kirknewton	£90: 0: 0
Bamborough	£230: 9: 4	Ford	£86:13: 4
Chatton	£100: 0: 0	Ellingham	£50: 0: 0

[1] The cure was served by the monks of Holy Island.

The trend of ecclesiastical wealth during the following two and a half centuries was roughly speaking towards the south and east. The unsettled political conditions brought the values of the enormous northern and western parishes tumbling down, Simonburn, for instance, from £130:4:2 in 1291 to £34:6:8 in 1535, and Elsdon from £90:16:5 to £20; while in certain parts of the more populous section of the diocese more intensive agricultural and industrial production maintained, among other things, the financial status of the parish churches. Significantly enough, it is in precisely those areas where development is most marked during our period that the values of the benefices show least difference between 1291 and 1536. Parishes along both banks of the Tyne from Tynemouth to Corbridge benefited by the growing industrial and commercial activity of the area; while in Northumberland, within a radius of about 20 miles of Tynemouth, there was little appreciable decline in the monetary value of the churches. Early established coal mines and the 14th and 15th century exploitation of iron deposits in these areas thus profited the clergy as well as the laity.[1] In county Durham, apart from those on Tyneside such as Gateshead, Whickham and Ryton, the benefices which retained their value most successfully from 1291 to 1535 were those in the valley of the Wear from Bishop Wearmouth and Houghton-le-Spring at its mouth /

[1] For the general economic development of the diocese, see above, pp. 5-15. The actual values of these parishes in 1291 and 1535 have not been recorded here. They are, of course, noted in vol. 2. Cf. map 1 for the location of the benefices.

mouth to Brancepeth, Wolsingham and Stanhope in its upper reaches. The value of some of the coastal parishes such as Seaham and Hesleden tended to fall, a movement which may be connected with the difficulties faced by the fishermen and merchants of the east coast ports in carrying on their trade against the menace of Scottish and French pirates. In Teesdale in the south of the archdeaconry the trends in valuation seem to have fluctuated according to locality; some rectories such as Longnewton, maintained their value over our period; some, such as Hurworth, Haughton-le-Skerne and Sockburn, dropped by as much as half; others, such as Stainton le Street and Middleton in Teesdale, even increased in monetary value.

Almost without exception, the parishes of the diocese were rural rather than urban: only the four Durham city churches of St. Nicholas, St. Giles, and the two St. Marys could be said to serve primarily an urban area, and even this is hardly true of the two former; while the smallness by modern standards and the mainly agricultural interest even of the city of Durham must be taken into account. There was no need for a sharp distinction between town and country cures; a greater or lesser density of population, usually in inverse proportion to the extent of the parish and the wildness of its country, was the main feature which distinguished one rectory or vicarage from another.

The average area of parishes in the diocese was, as we have seen, 27.8 square miles, by far the largest in the country. The diocese /

diocese of Carlisle, whose parishes come nearest to those of Durham in this respect, averaged only 19 square miles, while York and Coventry and Lichfield followed at 11.8 and 11.7 square miles respectively.[1] In the diocese of Durham itself, however, the actual area varied greatly from parish to parish: from the largest one of all, Simonburn, in the west of Northumberland - about 161,100 acres[2] - to Elton, one of the smallest, in the deanery of Darlington - 1,444 acres.[3] Mr. Hughes prints a useful map which divides the two archdeaconries roughly along the north-south 600 feet contour line in the foothills of the Pennines.[4] It shows the average areas of parishes to the east and west of that line to be as follows:-

East Durham, 10 sq. mls.	East Northumberland, 22 sq. mls.
West Durham, 43 sq. mls.	West Northumberland, 70 sq. mls.

In the archdeaconry of Durham, apart from the two western parishes of Stanhope and Middleton-in-Teesdale, the largest parishes were those served by the collegiate churches of St. Andrew, Auckland, Chester-le-Street and Lanchester. (These were in the deanery of Durham; the two collegiate churches in the deanery of Darlington, those of Norton and Darlington itself, served smaller areas.) In all /

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1 See above, p. 94 and Hughes, op.cit., pp. 31-32.
2 N.C.H. xv, pp. 167, 222, 256, 269, 272, 281.
3 V.C.H. Durham, iii, p. 232.
4 Hughes, op.cit., p. 35; this dividing line has already been used in chapter 1 in the section on population.

all three foundations - the second and third of which were founded by and all of which received their constitutions from Bishop Bek - the cure was actually served by the dean of the college, who had to have priest's orders, and whose appointment was in the hands of the bishop.[1] The dean, however, had a portion or prebend in the church and was thus not entirely dependent on the spirituals and temporals of his cure; these were, in fact, payable to the college itself as rector, and the dean stood rather in the position of a salaried vicar appointed by an appropriating house. His "stipend" was, indeed, fixed in Bek's constitutions, prior to which the cure of souls in the parish of Auckland had been in the hands of a vicar so called. In Norton the cure of souls remained in the hands of a vicar until the dissolution, while no deanery was established at Darlington until 1441.[2]

The cure of souls in the parishes of the diocese gave employment to a large number of clergy other than the beneficed rectors or vicars. Many - probably most - of these rectors and vicars were assisted in their parochial work by resident curates or parish chaplains appointed by the incumbent and paid a not very large annual salary. Occasionally, too, the records make mention of even lower ranks of clergy, usually in minor orders, who were in the service of the incumbent at his parish church, and were usually assigned /

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[1] Hamilton Thompson: The collegiate churches of the Bishoprick of Durham (D.U.J. xxxvi, no. 2) p. 36.

[2] Ibid., p. 39.

assigned some particular office in carrying out the church services.[1] Although all of these clerks were normally subordinate to a rector or vicar, resident or absentee, three parishes in the diocese, whose churches were appropriated to religious houses, had no perpetual vicarage established and their cures were entirely in the hands of their curates. These were Slaley, appropriated to the priory of Hexham, Muggleswick, to the priory of Durham and St. Nicholas, Durham, to Kepier Hospital (in 1443).[2]

The class of unbeneficed but ordained clerks who filled the curacies also provided priests for the chapelries into which many of the large parishes in the diocese were divided. Like the parish chaplains or curates they were normally appointed by the incumbent of the parish and paid by him an annual salary.[3] The cure of souls in the isolated hamlets which they usually served, was more or less exclusively in their hands, although no doubt in a parish such as that of Newcastle, which was divided into such chapelries on account of a large concentrated population rather than a smallish dispersed one, a closer supervision might be exercised by the vicar.

The private prayers and masses for which most of the late mediaeval chantries were founded provided a means of livelihood for /

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[1] E.g. the holy water clerk of the rectory of Stanhope. (R.H. f. 13.)
[2] F.D. and vol. 2, below.
[3] Cf. above, pp. 35-36.

for still more unbeneficed clerks, many of whom were retained as chantry priests. During our period most of the larger parish churches, the collegiate churches, monasteries and many other ecclesiastical buildings incorporated or came to incorporate, on the foundation of individuals or groups, one or more of these chantries; while a few chantries were constructed as separate buildings.[1] In each of them a clerk - or in some cases two or three[2] - was paid a stipend in return for saying regular prayers and singing masses for the souls of the founder and of such others as he designated in his bequest.

A further position for unbeneficed clerks was that of private chaplain in the households of many of the more important families. Such chaplains had the duty of bestowing religious attention upon their patrons, and also of acting as scribes when necessary. They were responsible for celebrating such parts of the divine service as their employers might have obtained dispensations to hold privately.[3] As a magnate, the bishop of Durham himself had private chaplains /

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[1] R. Neville Hadcock has listed nine in A map of mediaeval Northumberland and Durham (A.A., 4th ser., xvi) introd., pp. 159-207 passim.

[2] The chantry by the bridge at Morpeth, for example, gave employment to three chaplains. (Hodgson: History of Northumberland, vol. 2, pt. 2, p. 396.)

[3] In 1315, for example, Bishop Kellawe granted to Robert "dicto Gretheved" a licence to employ a chaplain to celebrate divine service in the oratory of his house at Eden for himself and his family. (R.P.D. ii, p. 720.)

chaplains attached to his household.[1] Although it is difficult to obtain direct evidence about these clerks in the earlier stages of their careers, it is to be presumed that the positions which they held were among those which provided the most hopeful prospects of advancement, since the clerks in the service of an important family had normally a first claim on the benefices which were in its gift. In the diocese of Durham, where patronage was concentrated so intensively in the hands of the church, promotion by means of lay preferment was less easy than elsewhere in England, but a minority of fairly profitable rectories was obtainable in this fashion; while for the clerks of the bishop the field was wide - and competition stiff.

Before ending this brief survey of the ecclesiastical positions which were at the disposal of the ordained secular clergy, mention must be made of the collegiate institutions of which they might be members. In the diocese of Durham these were of two kinds, collegiate churches and hospitals. If we count the larger chantry foundations which gave employment to more than one chaplain[2] as colleges of chantry priests, this would add a third type.

During the 14th century there were five collegiate churches in the diocese - all south of the Tyne: Chester le Street, Lanchester, St. Andrew Auckland, Darlington and Norton. In 1408 a sixth /

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[1] See Testamenta Eboracensia, i (S.S. iv) pp. 309-310, for a note of Bishop Skirlaw's bequests to the members of his household, including his chaplains.

[2] See above, p. 106 and note 2.

sixth was added when Ralph Neville, first earl of Westmorland, founded a college in the parish church of Staindrop, which was near the Neville castle of Raby. When a vicarage was ordained in 1412 Bishop Langley stated the composition of the college to be "one warder, eight chaplains, four clerks, sixesquires, six gentlemen, and six other decayed persons, to be by the Earl nominated."[1] The foundation was, in fact, a hospital for the poor and aged members of the earl's household rather than a collegiate church in the style of the five older colleges in the diocese. The constitutions of these five institutions were roughly similar, having been overhauled in the course of our period by Bishops Bek, Langley and Neville.

It is not necessary to detail here the canonries and prebends, deaneries and vicarages which provided livelihoods for the collegiate clergy: they are listed, together with their valuations, in volume 2.[2] Of the five, St. Andrew, Auckland, was the richest and most important, and consisted of a deanery, whose incumbent held the parochial cure, and twelve prebends; Chester le Street had seven prebends in addition to its deanery, Lanchester the same; Darlington consisted of a deanery and four prebends (a fifth, appropriated to the deanery, was created by Bishop Neville's reform of 1439), and Norton of a vicarage and eight /

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[1] Surtees, History of Durham, iv, p. 136; Hamilton Thompson, op.cit., p. 40, where Dugdale's erroneous statement that the college consisted of a master and six chaplains is repeated. (Cf. Dugdale, Monasticon, vi(3), p. 1401; C.P.R. 1408-13, p. 35.)

[2] Cf. also Hamilton Thompson, op.cit., passim.

eight prebends of very small value. Forty-one benefices, thirty-six of which did not involve cure of souls or lengthy residence were thus available in these collegiate churches, and many of them were in the hands of rich pluralist clerks who rarely visited their stalls.[1] It was, however, necessary for a canon, when absent, to provide a "vicar" who would reside in the collegiate church and take his principal's part in the services. Such "vicars" came from the ranks of the ordained unbeneficed clergy, and the prebends themselves were classified and valued according as to whether their vicar had to be in priest's, deacon's or subdeacon's orders.[2]

The income attached to the prebends in the Durham collegiate churches usually consisted of cash payments or the proceeds of manors. No churches were appropriated to, nor in the gift of, any of the prebends, although the prebends of many collegiate and cathedral churches further south took the form of the presentation rights to livings, usually converted to appropriation by the later middle ages.[3] The parish church of Thockrington in the diocese of Durham was itself a prebend of York Minster.[4]

The hospitals of the diocese of Durham, numbered at about fifty,[5] were on the whole less valuable than the collegiate churches.[6] With /

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[1] Cf. above, p. 34.

[2] See below, vol. 2, pp. 11-13.

[3] Hamilton Thompson, op.cit., p. 35.

[4] Neville Hadcock, op.cit., p. 185.

[5] See above, p. 34.

[6] This was not true of the larger hospitals, St. Giles, Kepier, Sherburn and Gretham; but most of the hospitals in the diocese had /

With the exception of the one at Staindrop, none was attached to a collegiate church, and most of the larger ones seem to have conformed to the common pattern of an administrative head, the master or warden, assisted by the brothers and sisters of the community who attended to the patients.[1] The warden, being in charge of the financial as well as other administration, had every opportunity to make his position a lucrative one, and it is obvious, from the names which occur in the lists of wardens, that these posts were frequently /

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had an annual value of only a few pounds:-

Annual valuations in 1535:- (Valor Eccl. v.)

Collegiate Churches, deaneries plus prebends:-

Auckland:	£180: 3:10
Chester le Street:	£77: 2: 8
Darlington:	£53: 4: 8
Lanchester:	£49: 3: 4
Norton:	£66: 4: 8

Hospitals:-

St. Giles, Kepier:	£167: 2:11
Sherburn:	£135: 7: 0
Gretham:	£96: 6: 3½
St. Edmund the Bishop, Gateshead:	£6: 2: 4
St. John, Barnard Castle:	£5: 9: 4
Elishaw:	£0:13: 4
B.V.M. Westgate, Newcastle:	£26:13: 4
B.V.M. in suburbs, Newcastle:	£9:11: 4
St. Katharine on Sandhill, Newcastle:	£8: 0: 1

[1] Cf. The Catholic Encyclopedia, Lond., 1910, vol. 7, p. 486.

frequently filled by just those wealthy pluralists who often held the most valuable rectories, deaneries and prebends in the diocese.[1] The complaints in Oxford University's "Articles on reform", sent to King Henry V in 1414, to the effect that the masters of hospitals were neglecting their patients and lining their own pockets,[2] were probably justified. It is unlikely, however, that anyone other than the warden could make much profit out of the running of a hospital; the brothers and sisters of the community had little or no authority outside of their nursing duties, although technically - in presenting clerks to benefices in its gift, for instance - letters went out in the name of the warden and the brethren and sisters.[3] Thus, for the aspiring clergyman, the hospitals had little to offer apart from their masterships. Moreover, out of all the hospitals in the diocese only six have left definite evidence of having given employment to more than one clergyman. It is, of course, likely that others did, but the majority - at least 30 out of the 50 odd which are mentioned in the records-were so small as to be indistinguishable from chapels, chantries, or even hermitages, into which some were, in fact, converted.[4]

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1 F.D., pp. 157, 169-70, 173-4, 181, 187, 188, 189, 192, 201-2, 205.
2 The Catholic Encyclopedia, vol. 7, p. 484, quoting Wilkins, Concilia, iii, p. 365.
3 E.g. R.P.D. i, 123-126.
4 See above, p. 34.

To sum up these brief notes on the secular clergy in the diocese of Durham and the various positions which they filled, it seems fairly clear that the majority of them were in one way or another occupied in the parochial cure of souls. There were over a hundred parishes, each of which - with the exception of those served by canons regular - required a rector or vicar; while most of the rectors and vicars seem to have had assistance from a parish chaplain or curate, and sometimes from other clerks, usually in minor orders. The extent of the larger parishes in the diocese resulted in their division into local chapelries, each of which required the services of a chaplain; there were over two hundred of these chapelries,[1] some genuine divisions of large parishes, a few established in castles and private houses for the convenience of the occupants and neighbours. During most of our period, in fact, it would probably be safe to assume that there were three to four hundred posts in the parishes to be filled, although plurality and vacancies in the less important almost certainly reduced the actual number of clergy occupying them at any one time.[2]

Outside of such parish work, posts were, as we have seen, available in some fifty hospitals, six collegiate churches and chantries which cannot have numbered much less than a hundred[3] - perhaps /

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[1] Cf. above, p. 35.

[2] Mr. Pantin estimates that in England generally the rectors and vicars were sometimes outnumbered by the chaplains and assistants by nearly two to one. (Pantin, The English church in the fourteenth century, p. 28.)

[3] Brand lists ten in the church of St. Nicholas, Newcastle. (Brand, History of Newcastle upon Tyne, i, 247-259.)

perhaps about 175 positions in all.

When considering these appointments which were available for the secular clergy, it is necessary to bear in mind that in the main part of this thesis we shall be dealing with the holders of only a quarter to a third of them: the incumbents of the parish churches and the collegiate churches. Although it will be apparent that we go a long way down the clerical social scale from the dignitaries who adorn the pages of Le Neve, we nevertheless are forced to omit the - regrettably - almost unknown ecclesiastical "proletariat": what we shall be dealing with can perhaps best be described as the"middle class" of the church.

The diocese of Durham was not particularly rich in religious houses; there were rarely more than thirty communities of the regular orders - including canons, friars and nuns - and by the time of the dissolution of the lesser monasteries the number had contracted to twenty-five.[1] Most of these communities, moreover, were very small, frequently composed of no more than ten members.[2] Only /

[1] Hay: The dissolution of the monasteries in the diocese of Durham (A.A., 4th ser., xv) pp. 72-73; Knowles and Neville Hadcock, Medieval religious houses, passim. The figures are exclusive of the house of Augustinians at Hexham, which was in the archbishop of York's peculiar, but not of its cell at Ovingham in the archdeaconry of Northumberland.

[2] Cf. Hay, loc.cit.

Only two of them - the priory of Tynemouth and the cathedral priory of Durham itself - were valued at over £200 in the Valor Ecclesiasticus.[1]

The preponderant position of the great cathedral monastery at Durham was the most important feature of monastic life in the diocese. Next to the bishop, the convent of Durham was the wealthiest and most powerful ecclesiastical force in the bishopric.[2] Not only that, the only monastic houses in county Durham itself were the cathedral and its cells of Finchale, Jarrow and Monkwearmouth. (There was also a small Benedictine nunnery at Neasham on the Tees.) Interestingly enough, it so happened that all six of the collegiate churches in the diocese were also to be found in the county and archdeaconry of Durham. As these were all foundations of the bishops (the late conversion of Staindrop, however, was at the instance of the earl of Westmorland), it seems that only the influence and power of the bishop was sufficient to impinge on the monopoly of the cathedral as a monastic corporation in the richest and most civilised lands of the diocese.

In Northumberland was to be found the second richest monastery in the bishopric and the only Benedictine house which had succeeded in maintaining its independence of Durham, the priory of Tynemouth. Tynemouth /

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[1] Durham, exclusive of its cells, at £1,366:10:9, Tynemouth at £397:10:5½. (Valor Eccl. v, pp. 306, 327.)

[2] According to Le Convenit: "Sit (the Prior) secundus ab Episcopo, scilicet, major persona post Episcopum in Episcopatu Dunelmensi in omni dignitate et honore Abbatis." (Feodarium Dunelmensis (S.S. lviii) pp. 212-3.)

Tynemouth, however, in spite of its comparative importance and wealth among the monasteries in the bishopric, was itself a cell of the great southern Benedictine abbey of St. Albans. It had therefore permanent connections with the south of England which were probably greater than those of any other monastery in the bishopric,[1] not excluding that of Durham, whose communications with religious houses outside of the diocese were infrequent.[2] At the dissolution, the complement of monks at Tynemouth - about nineteen - was probably larger than that of any other religious house in the diocese apart from Durham, which had about twice as many monks.[3]

Further north, near Morpeth on the River Wansbeck, was the Cistercian monastery of Newminster, the only Cistercian house in the diocese, and indeed the only house of monks - as distinct from nuns, friars and canons regular - which did not belong to the Benedictine Order. Newminster was founded in 1137 or 1139 by Ralph de Merlay and Julian, his wife, for monks from the Yorkshire house /

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[1] Of the seventeen priors who held office between 1300 and the dissolution, at least eight came from the mother house of St. Albans, and at least six were natives of Hertfordshire. As against that, two were Yorkshiremen, and only one is definitely known to have been a native of the bishopric of Durham - Robert de Rodes, of the Newcastle family of this name. (Gibson: Monastery of Tynemouth, ii, pp. 72-74.) If surnames may be accepted as rough indications of birthplace, the monks who occur in the 1539 surrender list seem to have been fairly evenly divided between northerners and southerners; we find William Carlel, Robert Gatshede and Master Stephen Hexham, and on the other hand Clement Westmynster and Robert London. (Ibid., p. 200.)

[2] V.C.H. Durham, ii, p. 91.

[3] Hay, op.cit., p. 73; cf. above, p. 33, note 1.

house of Fountains; at the dissolution it housed fifteen monks and was valued at £100:8:11 net.[1] Although it had no nearby Cistercian competitor Newminster never became a large or wealthy house. Sheep farming, which made the fortunes of the Cistercian monasteries of Yorkshire, was less extensive in the western hills of Durham and Northumberland and the most profitable monastic ventures into the industry were made by the priory of Durham.[2]

Of the four nunneries which existed in the diocese during the later middle ages, three - Neasham, Lambley and Newcastle - were Benedictine, and one - Holystone - was a house of Augustinian Canonesses.[3] Only one - Neasham - was in county Durham, and none seems to have been of any size or importance.[4]

The wealthiest religious house in the diocese after Durham and Tynemouth was not, strictly speaking, a monastery at all, but the house of Premonstratensian canons regular at Alnwick. It just failed to qualify as a "greater monastery" at the time of the dissolution, being valued at £189:15:0 net,[5] and numbering as its members /

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1 Dugdale, Monasticon, v, p. 398; Hay, op.cit., p. 72; Valor Eccl. v, p. 329.

2 See above, pp. 5-6.

3 Holystone seems to have been definitely Augustinian in spite of Dugdale and Professor Knowles, both of whom list it as Benedictine. (cf. N.C.H. xv, p. 459.) Lambley may also have been Augustinian. (Neville Hadcock, op.cit., p. 175.)

4 See, for example, Hay, op.cit., tables on pp. 73 and 84.

5 Valor Eccl. v, p. 329.

members seventeen canons.[1] The Premonstratensians had a smaller monastery at Blanchland;[2] while the Augustinian canons had an independent house at Brinkburn, and cells at Bamborough, Carham and Ovingham, the mother houses being Nostell, Kirkham and Hexham.[3] These were all tiny foundations, and the "cell" at Ovingham probably consisted only of the two or three canons sent from Hexham to look after the parochial cure of souls: Knowles doubts in fact whether it ever became conventual.[4]

The remaining religious houses in the diocese were the friaries in the chief towns: Dominicans at Bamborough, Newcastle, Hartlepool and Jarrow, Franciscans at Durham, Hartlepool and Newcastle (two houses, one of Minorites, one of Observants), Carmelites at Alnwick and Newcastle, Augustinians at Newcastle and Trinitarians at Walknoll, Newcastle.[5] Of these the largest houses were probably those in Newcastle and the Franciscan friary in Hartlepool, which had as many as nineteen brothers in 1535.[6] Most of these foundations were small by southern standards and none was very wealthy; nevertheless certain bishops - notably Hatfield - made considerable use /

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1 Hay, op.cit., p. 72.
2 £40:9:0 and nine members in 1535. (Ibid., pp. 72 and 84.)
3 Knowles and Neville Hadcock, op.cit.
4 Ibid.
5 Ibid.
6 Hay, op.cit., p. 73.

use of the friars as confessors and penitentiaries, and in these two offices they played their most characteristic part in the diocese during the later middle ages.[1]

So far as the social structure of the secular clergy is concerned, the monastic houses were most directly important when they possessed the advowson of benefices which had to be filled by ordained clergy. Durham and its cells, Tynemouth, Newminster, Alnwick, Blanchland, Brinkburn, Bamborough, Holystone and Lambley all had the gift of churches, most of which were appropriated, while those in the gift of Alnwick, Blanchland and Brinkburn were usually in the care of canons of these houses acting as vicars.[2] In addition churches were appropriated to the hospitals of Gretham, Sherburn and Kepier. With all these houses, then, we shall be especially concerned, but only inasmuch as they were corporate holders of advowson. The social structure of the monastic clergy is a subject by itself which cannot be treated here.

As a matter of fact, a brief glance through three of the available lists of monks of Durham between 1310 and 1446[3] suggests that most of them were local men and that few were of important families. The collegiate churches were on the whole a more popular avenue for the advancement of careerist clerics, and the local nobility /

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[1] Cf. Hatfield's commissions to friars to act as confessors and penitentiaries. (R.H. ff. 39v, 40, 42, 42v, 43, 46, 81, 82, 117, 119, 152, 168, 169v, 170.)

[2] See below, vol. 2.

[3] 1310 (M.C. 5985); 1416 (P.C.R. iii, f. 46); 1446 (P.C.R. iv, f. 49).

nobility and gentry took greater advantage of the stewardships and other secular appointments in the service of the monasteries than of personal participation in the conventual life and its rewards.

One important result of the predominance of the Benedictines in the Durham monastic community was the control maintained by the bishop over the monks by way of visitation - a firmer control than it would have been possible for him to wield over large houses of the exempt Cistercian Order. In spite of a series of struggles culminating in the conflict between the priory and Bishop Bek, the monks never succeeded in throwing off the episcopal rights of visiting, although as a direct result of the quarrel the method of conducting the visitations was defined in the papal bull Debent of July, 1302.[1] Thus the bishop of Durham could always maintain a degree of disciplinary control over what was by far the largest and wealthiest religious community in the diocese. The peculiar position of the priory of Durham, both its membership of an order which had not developed an effective system of internal visitation and its relationship with the bishop as his cathedral chapter, prevented the monks from ever standing completely apart from the diocesan administration, even if their vast economic interests in the parochial life of the church could have allowed this.

In the north of England, the constant threats of war and banditry /

[1] R. K. Richardson, The bishopric of Durham under Anthony Bek, 1283-1311 (A.A., 3rd ser., IX) p. 177; C.J.C. Extravag. Commun. Lib. I, tit. vii, cap. 1.

banditry also created a community of interest between monks and parish priests. The monasteries as well as the parish churches were refuges and fortresses in time of war, and like the parish churches they frequently suffered considerably in its course.[1] For the most part, they formed an integral part of the church; sufficiently esteemed to be the occasion of considerable popular ill-feeling when they were suppressed - ill-feeling which must be taken into account as one of the grievances which led to the participation of large numbers of bishopric men in the Pilgrimage of Grace.[2]

Part 2. The organisation of the church in the diocese.

In the mediaeval diocese of Durham there were several separate departments of ecclesiastical administration. At the head of all stood the bishop, and in his role as lord palatine he also stood at the head of the civil administration of county Durham. This latter need not, however, concern us here: it has in any case been fully dealt with by Mr. Lapsley.[3]

A certain amount of overlapping between the ecclesiastical and secular administration was nevertheless inevitable in the higher /

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[1] The canons of Brinkburn, for example, were reduced to appealing for royal charity in 1322 and again in 1333 "come il sont si nettement destruz par la guerre Descoce." (N.C.H. vii, pp. 457-458.) Cf., too, Mr. Neville Hadcock's note on the extinction of religious houses in Berwick as a result of the wars. (op.cit., p. 148.)

[2] Dodds, op.cit., i, 237.

[3] G. T. Lapsley: The county palatine of Durham, passim.

higher reaches of the governmental pyramid, especially so far as the bishop's council was concerned. This body, composed of the bishop's closest advisers, frequently helped to settle questions of church government in addition to its more obvious secular duties which stemmed from its origin as the bishop's highest feudal court. In 1313, for example, it advised Bishop Kellawe - in association with a delegation of monks - on the affairs of Durham priory,[1] and in the thirteen seventies it was helping to administer the college which Bishop Hatfield had founded for Durham monks at Oxford.[2]

The body which actually advised the bishop on such ecclesiastical matters was, it is fair to assume, composed chiefly if not entirely of clergymen. Indeed the clerical composition of the council must have been steadily increasing at least since the middle of the 13th century, when the emphasis for membership came to be placed on legal training.[3] At no time does the composition of the council appear to have been a matter of rigidity - not even when /

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[1] Ibid., p. 150, quoting R.P.D. i, p. 360.

[2] Loc.cit., quoting Script. Tres (S.S. ix) App. no. cxxviii.

[3] Ibid., p. 144; on p. 146 Lapsley goes on to say: "In the course of the fourteenth century ... the Bishop's council becomes smaller and more manageable, the accidental feudal element is excluded by a system of salaries, and greater prominence is accorded to clerics and persons skilled in the law, while the officers of the palatinate continue ex officio to be members of the council." Prominent among councillors in the early 14th century were two outstanding clergymen of the diocese: Richard de Eryum, priest, D.C.L., commissary, official and parliamentary proctor of the bishop, bishop's visitor in Allertonshire, rector of Redmarshall on royal presentation and royal officer; and Nicholas de Gategang, temporal chancellor and constable of the palatinate, justice in eyre, rector of Ryton. (See below, vol. 2, s.n. Rectory of St. Nicholas, Durham, and Rectory of Ryton.)

when it was (if ever) composed in fact as well as in theory of the bishop's tenants-in-chief. The bishop's 'council' was essentially a collective term for such men as he chose from time to time to ask for 'counsel' on given affairs, ecclesiastical, as it appears, or secular; it is a mistake to regard the term in an over-concrete sense, whether it applies in the 12th century to a feudal court deciding on feudal cases or three hundred years later to a high government body of administrators and lawyers at the head of the palatinate and diocesan government machines.

In purely ecclesiastical matters, the bishop's staff tended to divide into two groups, differentiated by the nature of their duties. There were, in the first place, the clerical members of the episcopal household staff, in constant attendance on the bishop wherever he might be. Lapsley has detailed the lay officers of the bishop's household,[1] the marshal, chamberlain, the steward of the household, to name the most important. The religious element was chiefly composed of the chaplains of the bishop's private chapel, who celebrated the divine services and cared for the spiritual needs of the household. They would also form the episcopal writing staff, the bishop's clerks, in the secular sense of the term.[2] In addition it is possible that some of the other household /

[1] Ibid., pp. 99-105. There exists no contemporary description of the organisation of the household, so that it is easier to detail the officers and their duties than to describe the departments they administered: there is, for example, no mention of a wardrobe or a chamber. If, however, we consider the small scale of the bishop's administration in comparison with the royal household officers, it seems safer to assume that rigid departmentalisation was not found in the former.

[2] Cf. Cheney, English bishops' chanceries, 1100-1250, pp. 9-10, 22-23

household offices were occasionally held by clergymen. Kellawe, for example, appointed one of the monks of Durham as his steward with supervision over all his expenditure.[1] It is true, of course, that Kellawe had himself been a monk of Durham before his evelation to the episcopate, and was thus unusually apt to prefer monks as his servants;[2] nevertheless among the large staff of attendants composing the household - probably more than a hundred and thirty in the 15th century[3] - there must always have been a considerable number of clerical posts available. But the internal organisation and still more the politics of those bodies which were in the personal service of kings and magnates (lay and clerical) are among the most difficult problems which the student of mediaeval history must face. Day to day contact made written record only too often unnecessary, and the part played by household clerks in influencing episcopal actions must remain obscure; but it is reasonable to assume that, however lowly this rank might be, their continual presence in the bishop's entourage would give them an advantage in his counsels not easily attained by the more official members of the diocesan administration north of the Tees.

The second group in the episcopal service is easier to trace. It was composed of the ecclesiastical officials who supervised the clergy /

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[1] Lapsley, op.cit., p. 102. The stewardship of the household must be distinguished from the stewardship of the palatinate.

[2] Kellawe's spiritual chancellor and confessor were monks. (Hutchinson, History of Durham, i, p. 258.)

[3] Lapsley, op.cit., p. 101.

clergy and enforced spiritual discipline in the diocese. Unlike the household clerks, this latter group of officials was permanently resident in Durham, or at all events it ought to have been. And such of its members as were not resident were absent, not as part of the bishop's permanent entourage,[1] but for reasons similar to those which caused absenteeism among the parochial clergy, namely, attendance at university or on kings, nobles or prelates, pilgrimage, or the pursuit of riotous living, usually in London. The late Professor Hamilton Thompson in chapter 2 of his Ford Lectures, The English clergy in the later middle ages, gives an account of these officials which might be applied generally to all the dioceses in England with some local adjustments. A very brief mention of such of them as are found in the Durham records will therefore suffice, since in respect of them the diocese of Durham had few peculiarities.

Holding episcopal commissions which gave them jurisdiction over the whole of the diocese - or in the case of the last sometimes over selected subjects within it - were the vicar-general, the official and the suffragan bishop. For most of those parts of our period which are documented by extant bishops' registers it is possible to /

[1] It occasionally happened that a clerk held a position in the household and also an administrative office in the diocese, usually an archdeaconry, which would probably, in such a case, be regarded as a sinecure in the same way as a rectory from which the rector drew revenue while the cure was looked after by a deputy. (cf. Hamilton Thompson, English clergy, p. 63.)

to trace these officers at work, more or less fulfilling the functions which Hamilton Thompson has ascribed to them. Briefly, the vicar-general was the officer appointed by the bishop during his absence to fulfil such of his functions as did not require episcopal orders or directly affect the bishop's patronage: the vicar-general could not, that is to say, perform consecration, ordination, confirmation nor the benediction of the heads of religious houses, nor, without a special commission ad hoc, could he collate to benefices in the episcopal gift nor exercise the bishop's ordinary right of visitation.[1] To fulfil that part of the bishop's spiritual duty which the vicar-general could not carry out, it was common during our period to engage the services of a suffragan bishop as a deputy - usually a clerk who held some purely nominal diocese "in partibus infidelium" or Ireland. These suffragans were usually also friars, members of exempt orders, and thus useful in giving benediction to the abbots or priors of exempt houses who did not wish to accept any form of episcopal jurisdiction.[2] In Durham suffragans were very frequently used to ordain the large numbers of clerks who came up for ordination five times a year.[3]

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[1] Ibid., pp. 47-48; R.P.D. iii, p. 208; R.H. f. 21; R.L. f. 4; etc.

[2] This last point is clearly brought out by Hamilton Thompson (op. cit., p. 50). I have not found any example of such benedictions in Durham, but the unimportance of most of the exempt houses may account for this.

[3] E.g. R.H., ff. 92-94; R.L. ff. 225v, 229, 231, 233, 233v, 238, 242, 243, etc.

The official or official principal[1] was primarily responsible for holding the episcopal consistory court; this position was by intention a permanent one, unlike that of the vicar-general,[2] but it was a position of considerably less power, for the cases which were heard in the official's court were instituted by the bishop or his vicar-general.[3]

Such in theory were the positions of the three officers to whom the bishop might delegate some of his powers. In fact, during the later middle ages in Durham as in most other dioceses, the functions of these officials were by no means so clear-cut and distinguishable. There was, for example, a distinct tendency for the two positions of vicar-general and official to be run together and held by the same man: sometimes the office of vicar-general was divided between two clerks. On the 22nd of September, 1352, for instance, Bishop Hatfield appointed Master John Appleby as his official; two days later he appointed both Appleby and William de Westley, dean of Auckland, as joint vicars-general.[4] At the beginning of Fox's episcopate Richard Nykke LL.D was created official and vicar-general in the same document.[5] Under Tunstall we /

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1 S.S. cxix, p. 46; cxlvii, p. 6.

2 In fact, as we shall see, the vicar-general frequently became, in effect, permanent.

3 Hamilton Thompson, op.cit., p. 51.

4 R.H. f. 29.

5 S.S. cxlvii, pp. 3-6.

we even find the vicar-general, Robert Hyndmer, combining his office with that of temporal chancellor of the palatinate.[1] On the whole, however, while in practice there was a good deal of overlapping, in theory the offices themselves were regarded as distinct throughout our period, and the posts of official and vicar-general were carefully distinguished and their duties separately specified in Fox's commission to Nykke.

Although the bishop's household organisation and the administration of the diocese were kept fairly separate except, as we have seen, where their personnel overlapped,[2] the judicial procedure of the church involved both of them. For, while there was no appeal from the consistory court of the official to the bishop, the bishop's own consistory, held coram episcopo by his spiritual chancellor and household clerks, reserved the most important spiritual cases to itself.[3] One of its important functions during our period was the hearing of cases of suspected heresy. In 1402 Bishop Skirlaw's mandate twice went out to the archdeacon of Durham to summon - in the first instance James Notyngham and Robert said to be of Roxburgh, in the second John Wythby and Notyngham, all accused heretics - to appear "coram nobis infra manerium nostrum de Aukland", although the second specified "vel commissariis nostris"; in any case it was to be at the episcopal manor at Auckland /

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1 R.T. f. 1v.
2 See above, p. 124, n.1.
3 Hamilton Thompson, op.cit., pp. 54-56.

Auckland.[1] The consistory court itinerated with the bishop and it represented that part of the spiritual juridical process which the bishop reserved from his officers to himself, as in other spheres he reserved rights of collation, consecration, ordination, etc.

So much for household and diocesan administration. The bishop also had his local officials, however, the chief among them being the archdeacons; two in the diocese of Durham, one for Northumberland, and one for county Durham. In theory the archdeacon was the officer primarily responsible for spiritual discipline and the upkeep of church property in the parishes and for the general discipline of the parochial clergy. His main instruments in carrying out his responsibility were his archidiaconal court and his annual visitation of the archdeaconry which ought - again in theory - to have been superseded once every three years by an episcopal visitation. In fact, so far as the archdeacon was concerned, the most important part of the visitation was the procuration to which he was entitled in the course of it, and gradually the payment of this procuration was to all intents and purposes regarded as the archdeacon's price for not burdening his clergy with his itinerant presence. In theory the archdeacon's court should have corrected the errors brought to light by his visitation; but during our period little use was made of either visitation or court /

[1] Liber S. Marie de Calchou; registrum de ... Kelso (Bannatyne Club, Edinburgh, 1846) nos. 538, 539.

court.[1] The archdeacon's official, nominally responsible for holding this court (compare the bishop's official vis-à-vis the consistory) found his chief occupation in the direct service of his principal in collecting the procurations.

This general description is fairly well borne out for the diocese of Durham by the lack of mention of archidiaconal visitations and courts in the registers, and by the lists of archdeacons of Durham and Northumberland.[2] These consist of a galaxy of the most notable pluralists, non-residents, and clerical careerists of the Durham church in the later middle ages, culminating in a series of Italian and French cardinals in the latter half of the 14th century. It was hardly to be expected that such exalted gentlemen would spend much of their time in their archdeaconries dealing with routine business and their main concern was with the revenues which derived from the offices themselves and from the rectories of Easington and Howick which were attached to the archdeaconries of Durham and Northumberland respectively.[3] From the Durham /

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1 Cf. Hamilton Thompson, op.cit., pp. 61-62. Presumably the loss of the "profits of justice" which the archdeacons must have incurred owing to the infrequency of their courts was made up by the income from procurations paid for the visitations which never took place. The court of the archdeacon of Canterbury seems normally to have granted the probate of wills. (I. J. Churchill, Canterbury Administration i, pp. 49, 53.) Professor Hamilton Thompson makes no mention of this duty in his Raleigh Lecture of 1943, Diocesan organization ... Archdeacons and Rural Deans (Proc. of Brit. Acad. xxix, pp. 153-194) and in Durham wills seem to have been proved coram episcopo. (E.g. S.S., ii, pp. 34, 45, 47, 51, 54, 60, 76, 82, etc.)

2 See below, vol. 2.

3 Ibid. In 1456/7 the archdeacon of Northumberland received papal permission to visit his archdeaconry by deputy and to receive procurations in money because he could not visit on the borders without personal danger. (C.P.L. xi, p. 189.)

Durham bishops' registers it seems that the archdeacon's most frequent duty was the induction of clerks to benefices following on collation or institution by the bishop; most letters of institution were coupled with mandates of induction directed to the archdeacon,[1] or directly to his official, the man who usually carried out the order,[2] and who himself usually held a benefice within the archdeaconry.[3]

The two archdeaconries were subdivided into six rural deaneries, two in Durham - Durham and Darlington - four in Northumberland - Newcastle, Corbridge, Bamborough and Alnwick. (By the end of our period a separate deanery of Morpeth had split off from that of Newcastle.[4]) The rural deans, although originally appointed by their superior archdeacons, had by the later middle ages become to all intents and purposes subordinates and appointees of the bishops.[5] Their appearance in the later Durham episcopal registers is infrequent - indeed, in the printed registers of Fox and Tunstall non-existent. In the earlier 14th century, however, we find them fulfilling many functions, usually on ad hoc commissions from the bishops themselves. Under Bishop Bury, for instance, the dean of Alnwick /

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1 E.g. S.S., cxlvii, pp. 11, 25, 51, 52, 67, etc.

2 E.g. R.P.D. iii, pp. 228, 229, 233, etc. Frequently the mandate was addressed to the archdeacon "seu eius officiali." (E.g. S.S., cxlvii, pp. 47, 51, etc.)

3 Hamilton Thompson, English clergy, p. 62.

4 It is listed separately in Valor Ecclesiasticus.

5 Hamilton Thompson, op.cit., p. 67.

Alnwick cites litigants to appear before the bishop's commissary,[1] the dean of Newcastle receives instructions to assemble the clergy of Newcastle for an episcopal visitation,[2] the dean of Durham is placed in charge of clerical miscreants pending trial,[3] and the dean of Corbridge is several times the recipient of episcopal mandates to induct - once indeed to the archdeaconry of Northumberland,[4] presumably because the archdeacon could hardly induct himself; but also to the vicarage of Haltwhistle in lieu of the archdeacon.[5] They seem, in fact, to have been veritable maids of all work, and were especially useful because, unlike the archdeacons, they were usually on the spot, and were frequently beneficed within the area of their diaconal jurisdiction, although non-beneficed clerks could hold the office.[6]

Such, in outline, were the main classes of officials responsible for the administration of the diocese.[7] It is not always easy to /

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1 S.S., cxix, p. 10.

2 R.P.D. iii, p. 521; episcopal visitations of the secular clergy seem to have been organised by deaneries (cf. I. J. Churchill, op.cit. i, pp. 133-40) and it may be that the rural dean declined in importance in our period partly as a result of the infrequency of these visitations.

3 R.P.D. iii, p. 324.

4 Ibid., p. 288.

5 Ibid., p. 215.

6 Hamilton Thompson, op.cit., p. 68.

7 There were others; especially, perhaps, the sequestrators, whose chief duty was the impounding of the goods and revenues of recalcitrant clerks, but their duties were narrower and more purely routine and executive than those of the chief officers.

to distinguish their duties, for the simple reason that the bishops themselves did not always distinguish them, and would, for instance, send orders to induct to rural deans and archdeacons indiscriminately. And when all is said, the bishops reserved the right to give their commission to any clergyman whom they chose. Cases were heard by specially commissioned clerks holding no permanent official position; a dean of the collegiate church of Auckland, a prebendary of Lanchester, an unbeneficed clerk, all could receive the bishop's commission to execute particular duties in the running of the diocese.[1] Thus many clergymen who held no recognised position in the official hierarchy, took part by special commission in the administration.

Another group of officials was rendered necessary by the existence of certain jurisdictional immunities pertaining to the priory of Durham and its appropriated churches. These were both spiritual and temporal and originally stemmed from the common inheritance of the Durham church - bishop and monastery - in the "patrimony of St. Cuthbert." This heritage from Saxon times consisted of lands and churches together with extensive rights of jurisdiction over them which, when defined by Norman law, resulted, first of all in making county Durham a palatinate and then in freeing the /

[1] S.S., cxix, p. 29; R.P.D., ii, p. 770; i, p. 63. Special commissions were, of course, not an administrative method peculiar to the bishops of Durham. They were used by ecclesiastical administrators from the pope downwards and were frequently directed to the unlikeliest recipients. (cf. Hamilton Thompson, Diocesan organization, p. 186.)

the priory and its churches from the operation of much of the episcopal administration.[1] In particular, the agreement of 1229, known as "le convenit", exempted the priory and churches appropriated to it from episcopal financial claims, mainly procurations. By the 14th century the nine churches which this privilege originally affected had been joined by nearly all those in the priory's gift, by virtue of its 13th - 14th century programme of appropriation.[2] The 13th century also witnessed an agreement between the convent and the archdeacon of Durham, which freed the priory churches in county Durham from archidiaconal jurisdiction. At first the archdeacon was permitted to exercise his jurisdiction, but only in the name of the prior, in acknowledgment of which the archdeacon paid him an annual pension.[3] By the year 1377, however, and following upon serious disputes during which the archdeacon was supported by Bishop Beaumont, the archdeacon's jurisdiction had been excluded from all the churches in the palatinate which were appropriated to the priory. Moreover, the archdeacon no longer administered these churches even in the prior's name; they were officially recognised as the "prior's archdeaconry" and administered by chapters which were held in St. Oswald's church, Elvet, or in the cathedral, and presided over by the "official of the prior's archidiaconal jurisdiction."[4] During the course of the 14th century, this jurisdiction was /

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1 These complicated developments are fully described in Barlow, Durham jurisdictional peculiars, chapter 1 passim.

2 See below, pp. 142-143.

3 Barlow, op.cit., p. 45, quoting Robert de Graystanes' Chronicle in Script. Tres (S.S. ix) p. 46.

4 Ibid., pp. 47-48.

was extended over the appropriated churches in Northumberland.[1] Thus in effect a third archdeacon came to operate in the diocese, although the duties of the prior's office fell to his official, who was responsible for ecclesiastical discipline in the priory's churches, who visited these churches, and to whom mandates for induction to them were usually directed.[2]

This priory official completes the list of local ecclesiastical officers in the diocese of Durham; but the bishop and the prior were each responsible for a jurisdiction in Yorkshire which was, in effect, archidiaconal. The Yorkshire franchise, as Mr. Barlow calls it,[3] consisted of estates and churches which had been donated to the Durham church, mainly on account of the prestige of St. Cuthbert, in Howdenshire and Allertonshire. By the 14th century the southern group of these estates and churches situated in Howdenshire in the south of Yorkshire, were entirely in the hands of the convent, while the northern group, gathered in Allertonshire immediately to the south of the Tees, was shared between the convent and the bishop. The priory, however, regarded all its property in Yorkshire as a unity, the prior having a status equivalent to an archdeacon under the archbishop of York. As with the priory /

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1 Ibid.

2 The wording of the mandates varies. Occasionally they were directed to the "archdeacon of the prior and convent", by whom the official of the archidiaconal jurisdiction seems to be meant (Mag.Rep., Ad.D., 1a 2e, 3, 46; Ad.N., 1a 2e, 8) and sometimes they were sent to the prior and convent "or their official" (Mag.Rep., Ad.D., 1a 2e, 11).

3 Barlow, op.cit., chapter 2, passim.

priory jurisdictions in the diocese of Durham, the actual administration of the archidiaconal office was carried on by an official, usually appointed from among the local clergy.

While it was to the prior's advantage to secure for himself the rights of an archdeacon in Yorkshire, the bishop does not seem to have pursued any such claim as regards his property south of the Tees. It is possible, as is suggested by Barlow,[1] that the bishop may have hoped to detach his Yorkshire jurisdictions from the archbishopric altogether and make them an integral part of the diocese of Durham - as indeed he did with the isolated parish church of Crayke - but in fact he tended to lose jurisdiction in Yorkshire to the prior whose official was always on the spot ready to appropriate any powers which were being neglected. And it seems certain that the bishop's official or custos spiritualitatis did not have the same interest as the prior's in his charge; for he was not a local clergyman, but usually an absentee member of the bishop's household who - like many of the Durham archdeacons - regarded his office as a sinecure. The powers of the bishop and prior in Yorkshire were, in fact, directly influenced by the type of administration which they respectively employed.

From this brief survey of the officers who administered the diocese of Durham, it is impossible to escape the conclusion that the part played by the bishop himself could be very slight indeed, and /

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[1] The present section on the Yorkshire franchise is largely based upon the treatment of the subject by Barlow, op.cit., pp. 91-115.

and even on occasion restricted to the appointment of officials. In fact, as might be expected, it varied according to the interests of the man who held the see. In theory bishops were supposed to carry out triennial visitations throughout their dioceses; in practice a diocese was fortunate if more than one visitation per episcopate was completed.[1] The bishops of Durham were little different from their colleagues in this matter. Their main seat, when in residence in the diocese, was not at Durham castle, but in their manor house at Bishop Auckland, and their main interests were frequently less spiritual than political and military. Even in their purely ecclesiastical affairs they were more concerned with politics than with day to day administration - which was, after all, to be expected in the chief official of the diocese. The visitations themselves, especially under Bishop Bek, raised vital questions of ecclesiastical politics and canon law, and at least in the early part of our period, struggles for power between the bishop, the prior and the archbishop of York absorbed much of the energies of these three potentates. Above all, perhaps, the bishop's sphere lay in "foreign affairs", if we may use this phrase in connection with the ecclesiastical politics of a diocese. His time was occupied in regulating his relations with royalty, nobility, papacy and prelates. For these reasons, it is not possible to say much of the bishop's business at this point; his place in the Durham /

[1] Hamilton Thompson, English clergy, p. 45.

Durham church will appear more clearly from a consideration of ecclesiastical politics.

Part 3. Ecclesiastical politics.

Within the diocese the chief development in church politics was the gradual definition of the position of the priory cathedral vis-à-vis the bishop. The character of the Durham church was very largely determined by the fact that the prior and convent was the only body in the diocese which had the power and economic resources to make possible a continued opposition to episcopal authority. We have already noticed the tremendous economic superiority of the Durham monastery - especially when taken in conjunction with its cells - over all other ecclesiastical corporations in the diocese.[1] With the possible exception of the priory of Tynemouth the other monasteries were all living too close to subsistence level to have any effective policy other than that of survival; and even that policy was not always effective.[2] In the main diocesan arena, only the bishop and the priory were left. What, then, were the issues between them?

Broadly speaking, they may be reduced to the question: how much independence of episcopal control was the priory to enjoy? And if this was to be the main problem of Durham's ecclesiastical politics /

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[1] See above, p. 114.

[2] Cf. Mr. Neville Hadcock's note that a large number of religious houses became extinct about the time of the Black Death. (op.cit., p. 148.)

politics during the middle ages, we must determine why it arose: why, for that matter, should the priory expect any independence at all of the diocesan ordinary? The Benedictine Order as such was not exempt.

The answer lies in the peculiarly wide powers of jurisdiction, both secular and ecclesiastical, which accompanied the early grants of lands - not to the bishop or the prior and convent - but to the "church of Durham" or of St. Cuthbert, to whose honour and for whose intercession most of them were made. Many of these grants were pre- Conquest, made before the Normans had introduced the monastic cathedral chapter to Durham.[1] They continued, however, into the early Norman period, but by the 12th century their number was diminishing, and with the acquisition of the wapentake of Sadberg in 1189,[2] the territories of the mediaeval Durham church were complete.

Long before this, however, the church of Durham had ceased to have any real unity so far as the ownership of property was concerned. The bishop, who enjoyed from the first the status of abbot in his monastic chapter, speedily ceased to concern himself with the routine duties of the head of a religious house.[3] His chief /

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[1] Most of our information on the early history of the Durham church is derived from the Historia Dunelmensis ecclesiae of Simeon of Durham, a 12th century Durham monk and chronicler. It is edited by Thomas Arnold in the Rolls Series, 1882-85. The best modern description of the foundation of the monastery at Durham as it affected the distribution of lands, churches and powers belonging to the "patrimony of Cuthbert" is in Barlow, Durham jurisdictional peculiars.

[2] Script.Tres. (S.S. ix) App., no. xl; Hodgson-Hinde, History of Northumberland, i, p. 230.

[3] During the 12th century it was not only the "bishop-abbots" who were /

chief residence in the diocese was not in Durham, but at his manor of Bishop Auckland,[1] and by the time our period begins, a good deal of the life of the bishop was spent in London or abroad. For most practical purposes the head of the monastery came to be the resident elected prior, who championed the monks against unsympathetic bishops such as Philip de Poitiers and Anthony Bek.

By the mid-14th century, after the strife of Bek's episcopate, relations settled down into moderate amity, and such alterations of status as occurred were usually of a purely ecclesiastical nature. Perhaps the most important was the culmination of the prior's efforts to obtain the effective dignity of an abbot. On the basis of a forged bull ostensibly of Gregory VII, Pope Celestine III had been persuaded in 1196 to grant such a position to the prior.[2]

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were tending to "grow away" from their communities. In non-cathedral Benedictine monasteries "the abbot himself was separated from the convent and came to have lodging, household, officials, revenues and estates directly under his control, as distinct from those belonging to the community and administered by the officials of the house." (Knowles, Monastic order, p. 276; cf. pp. 300-301.)

[1] Speaking of the English church generally in the later middle ages, Professor Hamilton Thompson can say: "Normally, while in his diocese, the bishop resided, not in his palace in the cathedral city, where his presence was not a source of content to the cathedral authorities, but in one of his country houses." (op.cit., pp. 45-46.) The first bishop's residence at Auckland dates from the 12th century. (N. Pevsner, County Durham (Buildings of England. Penguin Books, 1953) p. 52.)

[2] Barlow, op.cit., p. 22.

But the priors were unable to put this privilege into practice, and it was not until 1379 that Prior Robert de Berrington obtained an effective grant from Pope Urban VI of the right to use mitre, pastoral staff, ring, sandals and pontifical insignia.[1] This privilege, which was confirmed in 1419 by Martin V,[2] gave the prior the spiritual powers of an abbot within the community, thus making the bishop's spiritual ministrations unnecessary within the monastery itself.

Such was the rather unexciting tail-piece to the priory's efforts throughout two hundred years to assert its independence of episcopal control. They had begun in the 12th century when the paths of the bishop and the priory had begun to diverge, that of the bishop to lead - with the guidance of that papal policy of standardisation and centralisation in ecclesiastical administration which used the bishop as one of its chief instruments[3] - to his position /

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1 Script.Tres., App., no. cxxxi.

2 Ibid., no. clxxxv.

3 From the middle of the 12th century, there was a tendency for the centralisation of power in the hands of the papal curia to bypass episcopal authority (Barraclough, Papal provisions, p. 1 and passim) especially by means of the reservation of and provision to large numbers of lucrative benefices and by the creation of exempt religious orders, notably the friars. Nevertheless all church policy which was of papal instigation and not the product of the ambition of local interests (e.g. the desire of university graduates for preferential treatment in the contest for benefices) recognised the bishop as the chief instrument of ecclesiastical discipline in the localities, and episcopal authority was greatly enhanced when it became the principal executive power in enforcing the 13th century programme of disciplinary reform formulated at the Lateran Council of 1215. (Ibid.; Jacob, Petitions for benefices (Essays in the Conciliar Epoch, 2nd ed., Manchester, 1953, pp. 223-239) passim; Hefele /

position as spiritual, administrative and legal head of the diocese - the diocesan judex ordinarius.[1] The interests of the priory, on the other hand, remained obstinately private - those of a wealthy ecclesiastical corporation and land-owner - and were seen as such ever more clearly in contrast to the bishop's fast-developing "public" authority. Perhaps more than anything else, this was the reason why the priory always remained subordinate to the bishop. It was not inevitable that this should be so: the early grants of lands and jurisdictions on which the bishops later built their palatinate rights might have served the priory, when its property was separated from that of the bishop, as a basis for the erection of similar privileges. Instead the prior became the first baron of the palatinate and "the greatest tenant of the Bishop."[2] The prior's subordination to his abbot-bishop within the monastery, his residence in Durham in contrast with the bishop's frequent periods at the royal court, the king's need for a strong magnate to control the north of England and reinforce the border: these were all essential factors in elevating the bishop and depressing the priory in secular power. Although the origin of the palatinate lay in early grants, there is little doubt that the kings of England acquiesced in the bishop's later interpretation of them because of the military convenience of the palatinate. But neither the king nor still less the bishop would tolerate a similar /

Hefele-Leclercq, Histoire des Conciles, V, ii, pp. 1323-1390; cf. Gibbs and Lang, Bishops and reform, pt. iii, passim.)

[1] The term is briefly explained by Hamilton Thompson, op.cit., p. 57.

[2] Lapsley, op.cit., p. 64.

similar interpretation being put upon the priory's immunities within the palatinate.

The first formulated agreement between the bishop and the priory, "Le convenit" of 1229, represented a considerable curtailment of the claims made by the convent in the 12th century.[1] The monks retained their lands, but "exceptis placitis coronāe et placitis terrāe motis per breve Episcopi vel Domini Regis, sede vacante;"[2] they enjoyed baronial, not palatinate or franchisal, jurisdiction.

"Le convenit" also failed to realise the monastery's full claims to an ecclesiastical immunity for all the churches on its lands, narrowing the privilege down to include only those churches which were appropriated, and to which, therefore, the priory stood as rector. At this period there were about nine.[3] Moreover, while these appropriated churches were free from financial obligations to the bishop, such as procurations, he still retained his rights of custody, sequestration and induction. During the following three centuries few changes occurred in the respective rights of bishop and priory; but the great increase in appropriation during the 13th century meant that the convent's ecclesiastical franchise /

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[1] Barlow, op.cit., p. 39. The document, the original of which is in the Dean and Chapter Archives at Durham (Mag.Rep.Pont., 1a 4e,4), is printed in Feodarium prioratus dunelmensis (S.S. lviii) pp. 212-217. It is discussed, from the aspect of the partition of powers between the bishop and the convent, in Barlow, pp. 30-40.

[2] Feodarium, p. 215.

[3] Barlow, op.cit., p. 39.

franchise was applied to most of the churches on its lands in the bishopric.[1]

The accommodation reached between the priory and the bishop's archdeacons in the course of the 13th and 14th centuries has already been mentioned.[2] In brief, it gave the prior archdiaconal rights of jurisdiction over the priory's churches. Naturally enough, the bishops tended to support the claims of the archdeacons against the convent when it came to an open conflict, and Bishop Beaumont went to a considerable amount of trouble in order to achieve a compromise settlement between the priory and Thomas de Goldesburgh, archdeacon of Durham, which allowed Goldesburgh to visit priory churches without paying the pension symbolising the fact that he was acting for the prior. On Goldesburgh's death in December, 1330, Beaumont succeeded in prolonging this settlement in favour of the new archdeacon, his nephew Aimery de Beaumont, but only for his own (i.e. the bishop's) lifetime.[3] The episode is worth noticing in the first place because it reveals the unity of interest between the bishop and his main instrument of local administration in the diocese against the powers and claims of its largest /

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[1] By the middle of the 14th century 16 out of 22 churches in the gift of the priory were appropriated. (See below, vol. 2; cf. Barlow, op.cit., pp. 40-43.) These figures do not take account of the priory churches in the dioceses of York, Lincoln and St. Andrews.

[2] See above, pp. 133-134.

[3] The course of the disputes are traced in Barlow, op.cit., pp. 45-47, citing contemporary evidence in R.P.D. i, pp. 203, 266-7, 471, 692 and Script.Tres. (S.S. ix) pp. 103-4, 108-110.

largest sectional interest; and secondly because it shows the weakness of the archdeacons in face of this sectional interest when they were not directly supported by the bishop. Hatfield seems to have been less concerned with the claims of the archdeacons, and, as we have already seen,[1] during his episcopate these officials were totally excluded from the priory churches.

Nor was it only the archdeacons who depended on episcopal support if they were to maintain their rights against priory encroachment. Smaller religious houses found that their interests were apt to be overridden by the powerful cathedral-monastery. The business deal between Kepier Hospital and the priory in 1336, for example, involved the hospital in the exchange of its valuable annual tithes at Pittington for the not very profitable patronage of the parish of Hunstanworth.[2] Even the clergy who held the vicarages of the priory's appropriated churches, dependent as they were on the monks for their stipends and their shares in the fruits of the parish, owed a good deal of such livelihood as they obtained to episcopal enforcing of minimum vicarial portions and stipends in accordance with the decrees of the Lateran and other councils.[3]

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[1] Above, p. 133.

[2] S.S. cxix, pp. 104-5. The rectory was valued at less than £4 in 1318 and was worth only an annual pension of 6/8 to Kepier Hospital in 1535. (See below, vol. 2, s.n. Hunstanworth.)

[3] Lateran Decree xxxii (Hefele-Leclercq, Histoire des Conciles, V, ii, 1323-1390); the appropriation of Longbenton to Balliol College and the episcopal institution of a vicarage are in R.P.D. iii, 403-5. Much later, in 1496, Bishop Fox authorised George Lawes, rector of Simonburn, to appoint a vicar, because of the size of the parish, and ordained a vicarage. The ordination /

The essence of the bishop's power was his status as diocesan ordinary. As supreme judge in church affairs, he was the authority to which all the clergy in the diocese had an ultimate right of appeal, and for their own security the mass of the clergy had to support him. They were under no such obligation to support the priory, itself subject to the supreme episcopal power. Moreover, all beneficed clergy were indebted to the bishop for their institution and induction, while many of them - those holding benefices in the episcopal gift - owed their positions entirely to his power of collation. Last, but by no means least, it was in the bishop's power to impede the entire career of an ambitious clerk, who regarded his benefice in the light of a scholarship, or whose employment lay in the service of a lay or ecclesiastical magnate, merely by refusing an application for a licence for non-residence. Ex officio, in fact, the bishop wielded the sword of immediate ecclesiastical discipline in the diocese: the only way past his jurisdiction was by costly appeals to York or Rome. Within the diocese the bishop could always claim tobe acting "pro bono publico", and no other ecclesiastical group - not even the priory - could compete with that.

Even so, the bishops considered it worth their while to foster at least one group among the secular clergy in order to offset any possible competition from the monks. This group was composed of the /

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ordination stipulated that the vicar was to have a room in the rectory and a stipend of 100/- per annum. Failure to pay this sum at regular six-monthly intervals would render the rector liable to a fine of 20/- payable to the bishop's alms fund. (S.S. cxlvii, 37-41.)

the secular canons of the collegiate churches.

Before the end of the 12th century three of these collegiate churches - Darlington, St. Andrew Auckland and Norton - were flourishing after their primitive fashion.[1] While there is no evidence to support the tradition that these three colleges were founded immediately after the inauguration of Durham priory in order to provide for the dispossessed community of secular "canons" who had functioned there before 1083; it is quite certain that they had the support of most of the 12th century bishops - notably Hugh Pudsey who seems to have done much to establish the collegiate church at Darlington and to recreate there the pre-Benedictine arrangement at Durham.[2] The episcopal motive was admirably defined by Professor Hamilton Thompson, when he wrote that the bishops "were to find the monastic body of Durham end its privileges hard to control; and here, as in other dioceses with cathedral chapters of monks, the establishment of secular chapters in collegiate churches gave them the means of supplying their household clerks with benefices and surrounding themselves with a body-guard to counteract the independence of the cathedral priory."[3] It was an aim /

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[1] See Hamilton Thompson, The collegiate churches of the bishoprick of Durham (D.U.J. xxxvi, 2) p. 34: "The constitution which he (Bishop Pudsey) left there (at Darlington) was not that of a collegiate church with head and members. It was rather that of a church of 'portioners', with four incumbents equal in status, each deriving his revenues from a quarter of the entire fruits of the church."

[2] Ibid., quoting Script.Tres. p. 14.

[3] Hamilton Thompson, op.cit., p. 33.

aim which, if not entirely honourable, was surely understandable, especially as fewer bishops were being chosen from the monks themselves. Moreover, it was an aim paralleled in many respects by those of several other contemporary English bishops. The most celebrated instance occurred at Canterbury, where a succession of episcopal efforts to establish a collegiate chapter at Hackington, Lambeth and finally Maidstone were sponsored by so capable and clear-sighted a primate as Hubert Walter and were finally quashed in 1200, after fourteen years' desperate struggle by the Benedictine monks of Canterbury, only on the decision of Innocent III himself. Without much doubt the object of the archbishops of Canterbury was the foundation of a new cathedral chapter of secular clerks, which would provide benefices for their staffs and - witness the enthusiastic support of the king - for the clerks of the royal administration. In addition the canons were probably intended to provide a new electoral body for the selection of the archbishops. Although in Canterbury the alliance between monks and the pope emerged victorious over the archbishop and the king, the divergent interests of monastic cathedrals and non-regular bishops forced the establishment of duplicate chapters in two English dioceses: Coventry-Lichfield and Bath-Wells. These compromises represented the greatest success of the bishops. In Durham the privileges of the monks were too firmly entrenched to be divided, and the most the bishops could get from the collegiate churches was benefices for their clerks and solid centres of support for /

for themselves. Needless to say, the colleges also provided the king, during episcopal vacancies, with patronage for distribution.[1] They were sufficiently useful to be sure of episcopal interest and support throughout the middle ages. Anthony Bek - significantly enough the most vicious enemy of the monks among all the bishops of Durham - reorganised the constitution of Auckland and established colleges in the churches of Chester-le-Street and Lanchester; while in 1428 and 1439 respectively, Bishops Langley and Neville instituted extensive reforms at Auckland and Darlington.[2] But the final, and most conclusive, proof of the importance of the collegiate churches to the bishops is to be found less perhaps in their episcopal ordinances than in the collation-lists in the registers: few were the deaneries or prebends which did not frequently come into the possession of an episcopal or royal household clerk.[3] Without these colleges, and with a fifth of the remaining benefices in the diocese in the gift of the prior and convent, the bishops of Durham would have been hard pressed to maintain their administrations, and the influence of the priory on episcopal officers and hence episcopal policy must have appreciably increased.

If the foundation of collegiate churches be regarded as an indirect /

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1 A brief outline of the struggle of the English episcopate to replace monastic by secular chapters during the later 12th century is provided by Knowles, Monastic order, pp. 319-30.

2 Hamilton Thompson, op.cit., pp. 35-40.

3 Cf. the list of incumbents in the five churches in volume 2, below.

indirect means by which the bishop might bolster up his influence outside the sphere of the prior and convent, it is very significant that in 1283 and 1286 respectively the rectories of Lanchester and Chester-le-Street were erected into colleges by Bishop Bek, a decade and a half before he entered upon the most violent phase of the episcopal trial of strength with the priory. Although his episcopate (1283-1311) does not fall within the period of this study, Bek's influence was felt throughout the later middle ages as the bishop who both settled for good the priory's inferiority to the diocesan and who presented himself in military panoply as the very archetype of the semi-independent mediaeval prince-bishop. He represented the apex of episcopal and palatinate pretensions, and during his stormy episcopate may be seen at work nearly all the conflicting forces which went to make up the politics of the mediaeval church in Durham.[1]

The most important issue lay between Bek and the priory, but it was no longer about territorial or jurisdictional claims stemming from the 11th century organisation of the cathedral. In the last decades of the 13th century the point - more vital to the life of the priory - was how far the bishop was to control its domestic affairs by means of visitations. Nobody, of course, denied the bishop's right to visit - the convent was not exempt from episcopal jurisdiction /

[1] Bek's episcopate has received two fairly detailed treatments within the last 40 years: The bishopric of Durham under Anthony Bek, 1283-1311. By R. K. Richardson. (A.A. 3rd Ser. ix, pp. 89-229.) And Miss C. M. Fraser's Durham Ph.D. thesis of 1951 on the life of Bek.

jurisdiction; but what the monks did take exception to was the bishop's intention to carry out his visitation in what they held to be an unseemly manner. In May, 1300, Bek was preceded by a blanket excommunication under which all disturbers of the laws, liberties and possessions of himself or his church would automatically fall, and accompanied by a large staff of his retainers, both lay and ecclesiastical. The excommunication, if hardly tactful, was at any rate legal; the retinue was neither tactful nor, according to the monks, legal.

The fact that the visitation was occasioned by the growth of opposition to the newly elected prior, Richard de Hoton, within a small section of the convent itself made episcopal tact even more than usually necessary in dealing with the monks. Hoton was accused by a group of inimical brethren of dilapidation, perjury, conspiracy and - in the usual mediaeval tradition - of other crimes just as deplorable but much less credible. Mr. Richardson's opinion is that the root of the trouble was Hoton's notorious nepotism.[1] At any rate Hoton seems to have been in no position to surrender any of his personal or official rights or claims of right. Pleading the privilege of the house, he insisted that, during the visitation, Bishop Bek should enter the cathedral alone and use members of the convent as his secretaries. Since all but ten of the monks - that is about seventy-eight of the total complement - supported /

[1] Richardson, op.cit., p. 137, quoting Script.Tres. p. 75.

supported Hoton, he could have depended on having his side of the case well upheld. Bek was having none of this, however, and although he agreed to send most of his retainers out of the chapter house during the hearing of the monks' cases, he kept by him three or four of his clerks and a notary - enough to extinguish the prior's hopes of receiving preferential treatment. The upshot was that Hoton and the majority of the monks withdrew from the chapter house and were promptly declared by Bek to have fallen under the already proclaimed excommunication. Then followed ten years of bitter and confused strife, during which the bishop deposed Hoton and secured the appointment of a new prior, Henry de Luceby. Appeals to York and Rome raised inconclusively the old issue of the metropolitan's authority in the diocese of Durham, and resulted in a final papal verdict in favour of Hoton, who, however, died in 1308 before it could take effect. Appeals were also made to the king, but his compromise proposals, although in theory accepted by both sides, were in practice simply ignored by the bishop, and royal reprisals included on two separate occasions the sequestration of the palatinate. Simultaneously the tenants of the bishop, antagonised by Bek's attempts to force them to military service outside of the palatinate and - more strongly - by the exactions of his steward and other officials, took the opportunity provided by his preoccupation with the monastery to revolt against him.[1]

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[1] Ibid., pp. 138-143, 168.

The eventual outcome of the quarrel was not very conclusive. A minor definition was added to canon law in the bull Debent of July 23, 1302, which permitted the bishop two or three attendants, but including one Benedictine monk, on his visitation of the monastery, and which was later included in the Extravagants.[1] But neither Hoton nor Luceby can be said to have established an undisputed claim to the priorate. Certainly Hoton had the right on his side, as was finally recognised by the pope in 1306 in the bull, Olim ex certis causis, but he died in exile and spent a good deal of his early priorate in the bishop's prison. Luceby, on the other hand, had little but the bishop's force to maintain his position; he did not remain prior after Hoton's death, when a candidate acceptable to both Bek and his monastic chapter was found in the person of William de Tanfield.

The quarrel was more remarkable for its implications than for its tangible results. It showed the lord palatine at his highest peak of independence, defying even the king; but it also showed him at the limit of his power, and an untenable limit at that. It proved that the bishop of Durham, with the backing of his temporal power and wealth could defy his chapter and his metropolitan and bribe the pope; but it also proved that this temporal power was a threat both to his feudal tenants and to his feudal overlord, the king. It could not be taken away from him on account of the political and military situation in the border area, but if Durham was /

[1] C.J.C. Extravag.Commun. Lib. I. Tit. vii, cap. 1.

was to remain in any sense under the authority of the royal government of England, it was essential that the bishop should regard himself as a servant of the king as well as lord of the palatinate. Thus for most of the two centuries after Bek's death, the bishopric of Durham was held by successful clerks of the royal administration or proved advisers of the king - men such as Bury, Hatfield, Skirlaw, Langley, Fox and Tunstall. After the violent reaction from the "prince bishop", which installed a monk of Durham - Richard de Kellawe - in the episcopal chair immediately after Bek's death (surely a classic example of the triumph of an undying corporation over a mortal potentate) the kings of England made sure the greatest potential military power in the north should be in the hands of an administrator, not an ecclesiastical captain-general.

In spite of the moral triumph of Kellawe's election, however, the effect of the Bek struggle was to emphasize the essential dependence of the priory upon the bishop for its prosperity. To some extent this dependence was a result of the monks' need for episcopal support against the archbishop of York. The metropolitan's long-standing claim to visit the monastery and to exercise ordinary jurisdiction in the diocese sede vacante was being strongly pressed by Archbishop Wickwane immediately before Bek's election. On his election, therefore, the monks were especially dependent on Bek's support, and in 1285 they accepted his nominee, Henry de Horncastre, as guardian of the monastery in spirituality and temporality sede prioris vacante, in spite of the traditional claims of /

of the sub-prior.[1] At the time, interestingly enough, this official was Richard de Hoton. So much for the bishop as defender of the priory's claims. The years after 1300, however, brought the monks' dependence on the bishop home to them in a more drastic manner - namely, through the violent use of force against the convent by the bishop's officers and soldiers. Siege, starvation, imprisonment and torture were the weapons which the bishop could, in the last resort, use against recalcitrant monks, and no amount of papal anathemas and royal writs could be of any immediate help to them.

Bek's quarrel with the monks was perhaps chiefly significant in showing both parties how far they could successfully press their claims. After 1311 direct strife between the bishop and the priory was rare. Outside pressure from the Scots made unity essential and the monks were forced to look on the bishop as their military defender and the representative of royal power in the north, while the wealth and territorial and military resources of the priory's possessions formed an important part of the palatinate power.[2]

Before we leave the Bek dispute with the convent, it is worth our while to note that the monks, in Richardson's words, "took particular /

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[1] Richardson, op.cit., p. 110.

[2] According to Lapsley "the Prior was no doubt the greatest tenant of the Bishop." (op.cit., p. 64.) In 1343, on account of a threatened Scottish invasion, Bishop Bury refused to allow the prior to leave the diocese and emphasised the military importance of his presence "cum tota gente vestra sitis paratissimi." The prior evidently commanded a large body of fighting men. (S.S. cxix, p. 179; introd., p. xxxiii.)

particular umbrage at the presence (during the episcopal visitation) of the seculars and the friars."[1] Their objection to the seculars we have already considered. Their dislike of the friars was based on a fear of competition from these popular orders as confessors and as preachers in the Durham city churches during certain periods of the year - Quadragesima and Rogationtide. It is tolerably certain that Bishop Bury's monition of 1347[2] to the parish clergy of Durham city not to allow any preaching at these times other than that of the monks was directed primarily against the friars, who since the 13th century had become perhaps the most popular preachers in England. All over the country, in fact, there was strife on this point between the parish clergy and the friars, strife which became even more acute when the friars took to hearing confessions and burying the dead, both of which occupations tended to deprive the seculars of some of their income.[3]

In Durham the monks rather than the secular clergy were perhaps the most active opponents of the friars, and it is significant that when - for example during Langley's episcopate - the friars were not used a great deal as penitentiaries, the job tended to go to the monks as well as to seculars.[4] While Dr. Lapsley's contention that /

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[1] Richardson, op.cit., p. 147.

[2] Script.Tres., App., no. cxv.

[3] Knowles, The religious orders in England, p. 184; see below, pp. 404-405.

[4] E.g. R.L. 66v.

that "the friars ... never obtained a foothold in the palatinate"[1] is something of an exaggeration - the Franciscan friary at Hartlepool was one of the largest in the diocese - most of the friaries were certainly to be found in Northumberland,[2] and it may be that one of the chief obstacles to the free development of the mendicant orders between the Tyne and the Tees was the vested interest of the priory of Durham.

The episcopate of Bek and his long quarrel with the monks of Durham not only illustrates in brief the interaction of the forces in ecclesiastical politics within the diocese, but also marks a useful dividing line in the history of the mediaeval diocese. While the bishop was struggling with his chapter, his tenants, his king and to a certain extent even with the pope; while the monks fought amongst themselves, against the claims of their bishop and the archbishop of York and against the infringement of any of their privileges by administrative clerks or friars; while king and pope strove to preserve some degree of amity in order to ensure that the diocese would contribute its due share of man-power and wealth to the public good as these potentates saw it - that is to war in Scotland, France, Italy and Palestine; while these struggles were going on - and in part for the very reason that they were going on - the church and the people of the diocese were entering upon a new period /

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[1] Lapsley, op.cit., p. 50.

[2] See above, p. 117.

period in their history - a period which would have its own essential unity, maintained up to the dissolution of the monasteries and the Reformation. The main permanent interest in ecclesiastical history during these two centuries was administration. The period of rapid development was over: few advowsons, for example, changed hands between 1300 and 1540 as compared with the period 1200 - 1300. On the whole, the various power groups in the church had succeeded by the time of Bek's death in finding their own levels in the hierarchy, and most contests of power which took place were somewhat weary continuations of struggles whose origins dated back to the 13th, 12th or even 11th century. In secular politics, however, the comparative peace of the 13th century gave way to the violence of the campaigns of the first three Edwards against the Scots, these to be followed by three centuries of intermittent border warfare, family feud and gangsterism. Into such troubled conditions the clergy had to fit themselves as best they could. What they needed above all was a protector, a patron, or, to use the contemporary term, a "good lord." The most potent lord they could find for many decades was their bishop, but when his power declined during the civil wars of the 15th century, the protection of lay magnates had to be invoked.[1]

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[1] In 1446 the convent evidently found it advisable to retain the services of Sir Thomas Neville "ad manutendend. et protegend. nos et tenentes nostros" at a price of 66/8 (Durham Account Rolls, iii (S.S. ciii) p. 631; while they issued many "letters of fraternity" to powerful members of the nobility partly, no doubt, in order to obtain their goodwill and support. (e.g. Script.Tres., app. no. cxc: letter to Thomas, Duke of Exeter, 1426; no. cclxxii: letter to Anne, Duchess of Gloucester, 1475 /

The regroupings of society and the fluidity of religious thought during the later middle ages were characterised by a search for an immediate patron or authority to replace those which were gradually losing their influence. The old relationship of king, tenants-in-chief, subtenants, villeins, etc., was giving way in fact if not in theory to a grouping of the lesser gentry and yeomen classes around houses of vastly powerful families of the magnate class in a relationship which was based on cash payment in return for military, political and social support. During the earlier middle ages society tended to divide horizontally: we can talk of the barons revolting against the king without specifying which barons. But in the 14th and 15th centuries the divisions were vertical: one magnate against another and each supported by his clients and retainers. Eventually in England the two most powerful families of all divided the country politically in a struggle for the crown itself.

The spread of government by patronage and influence in secular affairs had its counterpart in the church. For the clergy, the equivalent of the livery and the maintenance, the wages and protection, the jobs and the perquisites, which were the secular rewards of adherance to a "good lord," was usually the benefice; and the equivalent of the lord was the patron who had the right to present - or anyone who had the means to dictate or influence his choice /

1475; no. cccxix: letter to Sir Richard Empson, 1508, cccxx: to Edmund Dudley, Esq., 1508. Also see R.P. vols. i-iii passim, and the list of letters of fraternity in S.S. vol. xxxi, pp. 106-120.)

choice. Since it will be the aim of the following two chapters to illustrate the relationship of the beneficed clergy and their local patrons in Durham it is unnecessary to develop this aspect of the subject at present. But the direct authority which was exercised with varying degrees of success over all aspects of ecclesiastical finance and preferment throughout Western Europe by the papal administration made it necessary for clerks desiring promotion or for such as wished to provide it for them (the universities, for example, or kings and magnates with clerical staffs to provide for) to have influential friends at the curia as well as in the localities. While the advocates resident at the curia were, of course, hired in order to represent their clients' formal and legal interests in Rome or Avignon, something more was evidently considered desirable - by those who could afford it. For them the most obvious sources of influence at Rome were the cardinals: not only were the cardinals the close advisers of the pope, but they had in their own hands the disposal of certain benefices. Thus they were the recipients of requests, appeals, commissions and subsidies from most of the lay and ecclesiastical magnates of Europe, as well as from the lesser clergy.[1] The terms of the following letter from Henry Krapf, bishop of Lavant, requesting a cardinal to have the church of St. Florian annexed "ad mensam episcopalem" illustrate effectively the analogy between /

[1] Cf. Mollat, Les papes d'Avignon, Nouv. éd., Paris, 1949, pp. 475-476. In 1370 Bishop Hatfield collated the cardinal, Simon Langham, to the rectory of Bishop Wearmouth in return for his support. (R.H. f. 67v.)

between the temporal and the spiritual lord, especially in Mollat's French translation:[1] "Très Révérend Père et mon très glorieux seigneur, j'invoque avec confiance la clémence de votre paternité et la supplie dévotement et humblement afin que vous daigniez prêter votre aide efficace et promouvoir près de notre Apostole la grâce souhaitée, etc." Even more significant is the term, "protector", used by the Florentines in addressing the three cardinals to whom they were paying a retainer of 300 florins a year for the dubious benefits of their "influence."[2]

In spite of the power and wealth of the cardinals, however, the trend in the church of the later middle ages was towards papal absolutism, and it was not to be reversed by all the attempts of the cardinals to consolidate their position vis-à-vis the pope from the twelve articles of 1352 through the period of the Schism and the Councils.[3] When individual clerks made their appeals to the curia for benefices or when their names were advanced on the rolls of magnates or universities,[4] it was essentially the clerks of the papal administration and in the last resort the pope himself on /

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[1] Most letters from English clients to the lay lords during the late middle ages were in French. The above letter, quoted from A. Lang, Acta Salzburgo-Aquilejensia, n. 862Bb, occurs in Mollat, Contribution à l'histoire du Sacré College de Clément V à Eugène IV (Revue d'Hist. Eccles. xlvi, nos. 1-2, 1951) p. 94.

[2] Mollat, Les papes d'Avignon, p. 476.

[3] Mollat, Contribution à l'histoire du Sacré College, pp. 100-101.

[4] Cf. Jacob, Petitions for benefices from English Universities during the Great Schism (Essays in the Conciliar epoch, 2nd ed., Manchester, 1953) pp. 223-239.

on whom they were depending; in the smooth and efficient working of the curial administration as applied to the system of provisions lay their best hope of achieving their appropriate places in the hierarchy of spiritual offices.[1] To put it less formally, the most effective "good lord" of all was the pope himself, as represented by his administrative officials; and when the papal administration was disorganised - especially during the Schism - the petitioners for benefices were among those hardest hit. In 1399, for instance, the most potent reason for the desire of the University of Paris to end the "soustracion d'obédience" and resume the French recognition of Pope Benedict XIII, was the thought of more than a thousand graduates' names forlornly listed on Rotuli which, without a recognised pope, had no legitimate destination.[2] For aspiring clerks - especially university graduates - who had no strong local connections, a strong and efficiently functioning papacy was an absolute necessity; it represented their only patron.

Because it happened that few benefices in the diocese of Durham were affected by papal provisions,[3] and because most aspirants for such benefices found the bishop of Durham, the king, or the prior and convent of Durham the most effective patrons, the disorganisation in the central government of the church which resulted from /

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1 Barraclough, Papal provisions, p. 160.

2 L. Salembier, Le Grand Schisme d'Occident, 5e éd., Paris, 1921, p. 177.

3 In all England, of course, the statutes of Provisors and Praemunire reduced the importance of the papal provision. (See below, pp. 293 sqq.)

from the Schism and the Councils was felt less in the diocese than in most parts of Western Europe. Nor - in the wider fields of politics - did the issues raised by the "Babylonish Captivity" and the Schisms and Councils create any divisions within the diocese of Durham; the Church in England uncompromisingly adhered to the Roman pope. But the priory of Durham was acutely affected by the fact that its cell of Coldingham with its pertinent churches and endowments lay within the "Avignonese" kingdom of Scotland. In 1391, the prior of Durham could base his protest against the intrusion of John Stele to the priorate of Coldingham by King Robert III largely on the fact that Stele's claim was "ex titulo Antipapae."[1]

The Schism increased the difficulty of the position in which the Coldingham monks were placed. Since the 13th century the rationalisation of ecclesiastical government had been whittling away the privileges of Coldingham in favour of the diocesan rights of the bishops of St. Andrews and his local officials, just as, in the diocese of Durham, the liberties of the priory of Durham had been at a disadvantage before the expanding episcopal authority. In the early part of our period, Coldingham's immunities - the result of donations from the early Norman kings of Scotland - were being steadily reduced in face of the expanding activities of the archdeacon of Lothian and the dean of christianity of the Merse. While the dean began to induct the priors of Coldingham, the archdeacon was receiving procurations in respect of the previously exempt /

[1] Priory of Coldingham (S.S. xii), pp. 71-73.

exempt priory.[1]

The monks of Durham and Coldingham received little if any support from the bishop of Durham. Indeed in 1311 we find the bishop of St. Andrews appealing to his colleague at Durham requesting him to compel the Durham monks to pay their share, in respect of their Lothian churches, of a diocesan tax to meet the expenses of Scottish emissaries to the Council of Vienne, with what success we do not know.[2] No extravagant conclusions need be drawn from this attempt to apply ecclesiastical discipline at an inter-diocesan level; but it is perhaps worth noting that such appeals from the episcopal chancery of St. Andrews to that of Durham - had they been frequent and successful - might have led to a division of interest between the bishop and convent of Durham. In the event, and with or without the help of his brother of Durham, it seems that the bishop of St. Andrews had his way, for by 1331 or 1332 Coldingham Priory appears to have been paying taxes levied by the bishop.[3] The bishop of Durham's comparative indifference to the fate of the convent's privileges in Coldingham suggests that his sympathies in the matter were, on the whole, with his fellow bishop of St. Andrews. One of the most important results of the Schism on the borders was that it severed the pro-Roman bishop of Durham from the pro-Avignon bishop of St. Andrews and /

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[1] Cf. Barlow, op.cit., p. 142.
[2] Ibid., pp. 141-2.
[3] Ibid., p. 142, quoting Priory of Coldingham, App., p. ix.

and completed the work begun by the Anglo-Scottish wars. Without these two conflicts, the monks' Coldingham franchise might have received even shorter shrift than in fact it did.

As it was, the priory of Coldingham was eventually wrested from the monks of Durham not by the bishop of St. Andrews nor by the situation created by the Schism. It was the power of the Scottish kings and the local families around Coldingham which made the position of the monks intolerable,[1] and when the priory was finally separated from its English mother house in 1485 it was annexed by a parliament of James III of Scotland to the Chapel Royal at Stirling.[2]

Most of this section has been devoted to a description of the interaction of various groups within the Durham clergy with each other and of the church of Durham itself with extra-diocesan powers and interests both lay and ecclesiastical. But the 14th and 15th centuries witnessed - in addition to contests between monks and friars, archdeacons and priors, bishops and kings - the development of a group which had a potentially far greater disruptive power within the church than any of these factions. This group was the Lollards, the heretics. As we know, the academic onslaught of John Wycliffe followed by the popular preaching of the Lollards did not succeed in either changing or disrupting the English /

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[1] Two priors of Coldingham resigned between 1446 and 1456. (Priory of Coldingham, Preface, p. xvii. Cf. A. I. Dunlop, The life and times of James Kennedy, Edin., 1950, p. 49.)

[2] Ibid., p. 49; Priory of Coldingham, Introd., p. x.

English church, and in the diocese of Durham, which was very far removed from the southern centres of academic and governmental activities and the South Midland pulpits, which were the foci of heretical pressure, the direct influence of Wycliffe and his followers was slight.

Before describing the sparse details which we have of this direct influence in the diocese, however, we must consider briefly the importance of the failure of Wycliffe's thought to deflect ecclesiastical policy on the main subject of this thesis, namely the system of patronage and appointments to benefices. In doing so, we need touch on only one aspect of Wycliffe's complicated and extensive philosophic and religious theory: his views on the doctrine of dominion, and these only as they applied to clerical authority.

Wycliffe, following Richard FitzRalph, archbishop of Armagh, held that dominion or lordship over men, which descended from God, could rightfully be exercised only by a person who was in a state of grace. If strictly applied to the priesthood, this theory would invalidate the ministrations of a priest who was in a state of sin.[1] The orthodox theory made the right of dominion dependent rather on the "mediation of the church", to use McFarlane's phrase. Thus the ministrations of a priest duly ordained and presented, instituted and inducted to his benefice if he had one, were regarded as /

[1] K. B. McFarlane: John Wycliffe and the beginnings of English Non-conformity, pp. 60-61.

as valid no matter what the state of the priest's soul when he officiated; he was, in effect, the impersonal instrument of the grace in the church. Had Wycliffe's views on dominion been generally accepted, among many other institutions which must have been rocked to their foundations would have been the whole system of appointments to benefices. For this system, however adequate may have been its provision forthe moral, spiritual and academic examination of candidates for benefices, undoubtedly placed a premium upon influence backed up by minute attention to official formality in the appointment of the beneficed clergy. It thus provided an admirable practical expression of the theory which Wycliffe opposed; while by endorsing the efficacy of the ministrations of any duly authorised priest, it implicitly encouraged the tendency to appoint to benefices on grounds of patronage rather than religious merit and to judge the priest by his titles rather than by his devotion.

There is little point in speculating on what would have happened had Wycliffe's doctrine of dominion been accepted (one possible result - as in some of the later reformed churches - might have been the choosing of parish priests by the "call" of the congregation), but there can be no doubt that the influence of both lay and ecclesiastical patrons would have been seriously challenged by those seeking to fill the cures from among the humblest and most "godly" of the clergy. Wycliffe's failure to win over the church to his views helped to ensure - among other things - the continuance during /

during our period of that vital influence on the social structure of the clergy, the routine of provision and presentation, institution and induction to benefices.

It seems fairly certain that the direct influence of Wycliffe and the Lollards was negligible in the diocese of Durham itself. Probably, of course, the theories of dominion, together with the rejection of transubstantiation, the predestinarianism and the insistence on the absolute authority of the Scriptures all helped to form topics of after-dinner conversation for the academics among the clergy in the diocese; while the convent of Durham did produce Wycliffe's most brilliant dialectical adversary, Uthred of Boldon, D.D. of Oxford in 1357, and sub-prior of Durham from 1368 to 1381. As McFarlane points out, however,[1] he had very likely been instructed to contest Wycliffe's views on dominion, which were directed against the monks no less than against the beneficed clergy, by the provincial superiors of the Benedictine Order in the Northampton chapter of 1372.

Even if Wycliffe's teaching was discussed, there seems to have been little attempt to translate it into action. Langley's register contains merely the standard "form" for the abjuration of heresy issued from Canterbury.[2] At least one of Oldcastle's associates, however, a priest called Richard Wyche, preached in Northumberland, where he was arrested and brought before Bishop Skirlaw /

[1] Ibid., p. 62.
[2] R.L.f67v.

Skirlaw in 1400.[1] It also appears that the vicar of Ponteland in the late 14th and early 15th centuries may have been the John Ashton who supported Wycliffe at Oxford and was condemned for heresy in a London convocation in 1382.[2] But neither Ashton nor Wyche seems to have had much success as a proselytizer, for evidence of heresy in the north of England is rare indeed. The only other example of Bishop Skirlaw's taking action against suspected heretics which has come to my notice occurred in 1402, when he ordered the archdeacon of Northumberland to cite, in the first instance, James Nottingham and Robert "dictus de Roxburgh" and, in the second, John Wythby and again James Nottingham, all priests, "de Catholica fide suspectis."[3] Of these three men, one seems from his name to have been a native of or resident in Roxburgh, which, although under the authority of the bishop of Durham at this time, was across the Scottish border; another probably came from the English Midlands; and only the third, John Wythby (Whitby?) seems to have been a northern Englishman.

The evidence on Lollard activities after the suppression of the Oldcastle rebellion suggests that they were chiefly confined to the Midlands and the South.[4] In the bishopric of Durham /

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1 McFarlane, op.cit., p. 162.

2 See below, vol. 2; cf. N.C.H. xii, p. 430.

3 Liber S. Marie de Calchou; registrum de ... Kelso (Bannatyne Club, Edinburgh, 1846) nos. 538, 539.

4 McFarlane, op.cit., pp. 183-5.

Durham, however, the absence of any heretical elements is further attested by the overwhelming popular support for the institutions of the Roman church even after the Henrician Reformation: some of the strongest support for the Pilgrimage of Grace rebellion came from the men of the bishopric, 5,000 of whom joined the revolt in county Durham alone.[1]

There can be little doubt that throughout our period there was no serious questioning of ecclesiastical dogma or organisation in the diocese. One of the few criticisms of the "system" made by any Durham clergyman of note was Bishop Bury's complaint in the Philobiblon[2] that papal provisions "obtained by insidious prayers" and the irresponsible exercise of patronage by magnates of church and state were elevating unworthy clerks - relatives and proteges - to the higher offices of the church. But what Bury was denouncing was the deficiency not so much in morals but in education, and his criticism was directed against the abuse of provisions rather than against provision itself as a method of appointing to benefices. After all, he owed most of his own advancement to papal provisions made on the strength of royal recommendations. In Durham, certainly no less than anywhere else in Europe, the aim of clerks and laymen was not to destroy the church either in its doctrine or its system of preferment, but to manipulate the existing machine each of them so far as he could to his own advantage.

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[1] Dodds, Pilgrimage of Grace, i, 237.

[2] Richard de Bury, Philobiblon, chapter ix (King's Classics edition, Lond., 1903, pp. 69-70).

CHAPTER FOUR

THE PATRONS

Any consideration of the subject of mediaeval church patronage in the diocese of Durham must be dominated by the fact that during the two centuries before the Reformation between 82% and 87% of parish churches were in the gift of prelates and ecclesiastical corporations. In 1350 there were 119 such benefices in the diocese, of which 99 came under ecclesiastical patronage (82%); for 1500 the corresponding figures are 115, 100 and 87%.[1] Thus in Durham the number of parochial benefices whose parson could be nominated directly by a layman was decidedly limited - probably more limited than anywhere else in England. In the county of Wiltshire, for example, 256 separate parish churches (rectories or vicarages) fell vacant between the years 1340 and 1366,[2] and the following table is designed to show the nature of the patronage exercised over these churches in comparison with /

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[1] Calculated from data in vol. 2. The figures exclude the parish of Thockrington, which was a prebend of York Minster and the cure of which was the responsibility of the canon; parishes served directly by monastic churches or by stipendiary chaplains are also excluded.

[2] The figures for county Wiltshire are calculated from the information on appointments to benefices in Institutiones clericorum in comitatu Wiltoniae ab anno 1297 ad annum 1810. Ed. Thoma Phillipps. Vol. 1. 1825. Unfortunately there is a gap in the record from 1355 to 1360, so that in fact 21 years are covered to provide the figures given above.

with the 1350 position in the diocese of Durham.

Table 1

	Total number of parish churches	Churches in ecclesiastical gift		Churches in lay gift		Unappropriated Churches		Appropriated Churches		Percentage of churches in ecclesiastical gift which were appropriated
Wiltshire: parish churches vacant 1340 x 1366	256	136	53%	120	47%	178	70%	78	30%	57%
Diocese of Durham: parish churches 1350	119	98	82%	21	18%	58	49%	61	51%	62%

Having stated the percentages of lay and clerical property in advowsons, we must now unfortunately proceed to make reservations about them; or at any rate admit that to base a conclusion upon Durham church patronage solely on them would be to leave out of account two very important considerations. The first is that while only three parishes in the diocese - Haltwhistle, Knaresdale and Simonburn - came at any time during our period under the regular patronage of the crown, the king presented to most of the churches in lay patronage during minorities in the patron families and to those in the gift of the bishops of Durham and Carlisle and monastic houses sede vacante. The second consideration is that some indirect /

indirect influence was brought to bear by those who wished to exercise patronage in the appointment of clerks to benefices. Laymen and ecclesiastics having proteges for whom they wished to find livings would not only present such clerks to churches in their own advowson but would also recommend them to other patrons, usually religious houses. The amount of success which the laity had in infiltrating their clerical dependants into benefices in ecclesiastical gift is one of the most obscure points in the whole subject of patronage in Durham and it is one which demands separate treatment at a later stage.

In addition, therefore, to dealing with two main groups of patrons - the lay and the clerical - it is necessary to consider two methods of exercising patronage - the direct (that is over benefices in the gift of the patron), and the indirect (over those in the gift of somebody else). The three parts which follow deal, first, with the direct patronage exercised by ecclesiastical patrons, secondly, with the direct patronage of secular patrons, and, thirdly, with indirect patronage in general, which includes "occasional patronage", or patronage exercised directly but not continually - for example royal presentations to episcopal benefices sede vacante.

Part 1. The ecclesiastical patrons.

At the end of our period twenty one clerical persons and bodies were responsible for the presentation or collation of incumbents to 100 independent parish churches in the diocese. It will be useful to /

to have a list of them in tabular form, together with the number of benefices for which each had the responsibility of finding a priest. In calculating these figures no distinction has been made between rectories and vicarages nor between appropriated and unappropriated churches; analysis will follow at a later stage.

Table 2

Patrons. In the diocese of Durham	Number of advowsons held
Bishop of Durham.	34
Priory of Durham and cells. (Benedictine.)	22
Abbey of Alnwick. (Premonstratensian.)	5
Cell of Bamborough. (Augustinian.)	1
Abbey of Blanchland. (Premonstratensian.)	4
Priory of Brinkburn. (Augustinian.)	2
Priory of Tynemouth. (Benedictine.)	2
College of Staindrop.	1
Hospital of Gretham.	1
Hospital of Sherburn.	3
In other dioceses	
Balliol College, Oxford, dioc. Lincoln.	1
Merton College, Oxford, dioc. Lincoln.	2
Bishop of Carlisle.	4
Priory of Carlisle. (Augustinian.)	2
Abbey of Coverham, dioc. York. (Premonstratensian.)	1
Priory of Guisborough, dioc. York. (Augustinian.)	3
Priory of Hexham, dioc. York. (Augustinian.)	5
Priory of Kirkham, dioc. York. (Augustinian.)	2
Priory of Lanercost, dioc. Carlisle. (Augustinian.)	1
Abbey of St. Albans, dioc. London. (Benedictine.)	1
Abbey of St. Mary's York. (Benedictine.)	3
	100

Naturally /

Naturally these figures did not remain constant throughout the 14th and 15th centuries. As we have just seen, the number of benefices with parochial cure dropped by four during our period from 119 to 115. One of these four, the so-called "sinecure rectory" of Middleton St. George, was in the gift of the families of Baart and Killingham; no pre-Reformation incumbents are known after 1435.[1] The other three, however, Alwinton, St. Nicholas in Durham, and Hunstanworth, were in the gift of churches. Alwinton rectory, previously in the gift of the Umfravilles, was appropriated to Holystone Nunnery in 1380; again, no vicars are known between 1437 and 1552, although the vicarage was mentioned in a visitation of 1501.[2] In 1336 the rectory of Hunstanworth passed from the priory of Durham to Kepier Hospital to be appropriated to the hospital in 1353. No vicarage was ordained, however, and the cure was served by a stipendiary chaplain (cheaper than a vicar and removable at will[3]) appointed by the hospital. The same arrangement was applied to the church of St. Nicholas, which was appropriated to Kepier Hospital in 1443. Only one pre-Reformation chaplain is known - John Swain, who is recorded in the 1501 visitation proceedings which have already been mentioned.[4] Such chaplaincies /

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1 V.C.H. Durham, iii, p. 299.

2 A vicarage, be it noted - not a vicar, as is stated in N.C.H. xv, p. 406 - was mentioned. Cf. ibid. pp. 411-412 and The injunctions and other ecclesiastical proceedings of Richard Barnes, Bishop of Durham. (S.S. xxii) p. xi.

3 Cf. Hartridge, A history of vicarages in the Middle Ages, p. 62.

4 S.S. xxii, p. xii.

chaplaincies, the tenure of which was at the will of the appropriating houses, do not come within the scope of this inquiry; hence, for the purposes of the above table they have been disregarded.

Also disregarded have been certain other benefices with cure of souls, which were either chapelries not served by a rector or vicar or were so closely tied to some other church - usually an appropriating house - that appointments to serve the cure did not involve the usual machinery of presentation by the patron, institution by the ordinary, and so on. Some of these churches, such as Holy Island, Jarrow and Monkwearmouth were served by monks of the houses of which they were physically a part; the parish churches of Howick and Easington were served by the archdeacons of Northumberland and Durham respectively or by their deputies; that of Throckrington by one of the canons of York Minster, to whose canonry the benefice was attached as a prebend. A full list of churches omitted from the "Fasti" in volume 2 will be found in the introduction to that volume; these are also the ones which have not been enumerated in the above list of patrons.

Within the group of a hundred churches whose patrons have been tabulated, advowsons changed hands rarely between the years 1311 and 1540, so that conclusions based on the proportions derived from the table will be applicable more or less throughout most of our period. But before passing on to these conclusions it may be as well to indicate briefly what those changes were, and, where necessary, to suggest reasons for them.

By /

By far the most important was the transfer of eight parish churches from lay to ecclesiastical gift. Of these, only one, Seaham, was in the archdeaconry of Durham, and its transference from its original patron, the family of Hadham, Lords of Seaham, to the Duke of Gloucester and from him to the Premonstratensian Abbey of Coverham, Yorkshire, was late - not until 1476;[1] in fact it was the last permanent alienation of the advowson of a parish church in the diocese before the dissolution of the monasteries. In the archdeaconry of Northumberland the alienations of such advowsons were as follows:

1330.	Stannington:	from Merlays and Somervilles to the Cistercian abbey of Newminster. Rectory appropriated and perpetual vicarage instituted 1333. The bishop collated directly to the vicarage.[2]
1334.	Kirkwhelpington:	from Umfravilles to Newminster Abbey. Rectory appropriated and perpetual vicarage instituted, 1350. The bishop collated directly to the vicarage.[3]
1340.	Longbenton:	from Somervilles to Balliol College, Oxford. Rectory appropriated, and perpetual vicarage instituted 1342.[4]
1359.	Bolam:	from Herles to the Premonstratensian abbey of Blanchland. Rectory appropriated and perpetual vicarage instituted.[5]

1378 /

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1 P.C.R. iv, ff. 174; 185-6.

2 Hodgson, History of Northumberland, II, ii, p. 281; Mag.Rep.Pont., 1a 3e, 5; Cart. ii, ff. 57-61v; R.H. ff. 173v-174v; R.T. ff. 1-6.

3 C.P.R. 1334-8, p. 36; Mag.Rep.Pont., 2a 3e, 10.

4 N.C.H. xiii, p. 399; Mag.Rep.Pont., 2a 2e, 12-13.

5 Ibid. 2a 3e, 9; Ibid., Ad.N., 1a 2e, 60; Cart. ii, ff. 61v-63.

1378.	Ovingham:	from Umfravilles to the Augustinian priory of Hexham. Rectory appropriated and perpetual vicarage instituted.[1]
1384.	Haltwhistle:	from the king to the Benedictine priory of Tynemouth. Rectory appropriated and perpetual vicarage instituted, 1385. The bishop collated directly to the vicarage.[2]
1386.	Longhorsley:	from Graystocks to the Augustinian priory of Brinkburn. Rectory appropriated and perpetual vicarage instituted, 1391.[3]

During our period a ninth advowson changed hands when in 1351 the rectory of Simonburn in the western hills of Northumberland passed from the king's patronage to be appropriated to St. George's College at Windsor as a part of the increased provision for the foundation. In 1482, however, it was disappropriated and the advowson passed to Richard, Duke of Gloucester, to revert to the crown upon his accession in 1483. It has been suggested that the disappropriation - carried out on the appeal of the college that the upkeep of the isolated parish was costing more than its revenue - was really a device to enable the Duke and Duchess of Gloucester to use it for the endowment of a projected, but never in fact established, collegiate church at Barnard Castle.[4]

In addition to these changes in the patronage of nine benefices /

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1 R.H. ff. 147v-149v; 160-161v.

2 C.P.R. 1381-5, p. 492; Cart. ii, ff. 63-64v; Mag.Rep.Pont., 1a 3e, 7; Hodgson, History of Northumberland, III, ii, pp. 95-99.

3 Ibid. II, ii, p. 90.

4 N.C.H. xv, pp. 166-170.

fices, there were three cases of appropriation in which the monastic house which already held the advowson of the rectory succeeded in having it appropriated. These were in the parishes of Kirkmerrington (patron: Durham Priory; archdeaconry of Durham), Alston (patron: Hexham Priory; archdeaconry of Northumberland), and Embleton (patron: Merton College, Oxford; archdeaconry of Northumberland). The dates of the appropriations were 1344, 1379 and 1332 respectively.[1] At some time between 1406 and 1436, it also appears that the status of the parish of Muggleswick (archdeaconry of Durham; patron: Durham Priory) was altered from that of a rectory to a chapelry;[2] while in 1412 Bishop Langley ordained the collegiate church of Staindrop on its foundation in 1408 by Ralph Neville, first earl of Westmorland; the rectory was now appropriated to the college which had the responsibility of appointing a vicar to administer the cure of souls of the parish.[3]

The chief reason given in the records for the acquisition and appropriation of churches by the northern monasteries during our period is impoverishment occasioned by the raids of marauding Scots. Indeed this is just about the only specific reason mentioned in the pleas and licences for appropriation. It was stated as the cause of the transfer of the advowsons of Stannington, Bolam, Ovingham and Longhorsley and for the appropriation of Alston.

Nevertheless, /

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[1] Cart. ii, ff. 226v-227; R.H. ff. 152v-153v; N.C.H. ii, p. 59.

[2] Loc. xviii, 36; R.P. i, f. 91v.

[3] Hamilton Thompson. The collegiate churches in the bishoprick of Durham, p. 40; Dugdale, Monasticon, vi, p. 1401.

Nevertheless, there were probably other reasons too, besides the altruistic desire of lay patrons to provide for the maintenance of religious houses hard hit by border wars. Not that this provision was purely altruistic; for as often as not the benevolent patron or the bishop in his licence of appropriation reminds the recipient monks of their duties of hospitality the provision of which ought to be facilitated by the revenues from their new possessions.[1] Such monastic hospitality was extremely necessary in the sparsely populated moors of northern England, especially to the most frequent class of travellers, the nobility and upper class gentry, who pulled most of the non-ecclesiastical strings of patronage.[2] Until the dissolution it was on the whole to the advantage of the patron class to ensure the maintenance of the monasteries.

At the same time the decline in the value of the northern parish churches may have tempted the patrons to dispose of them to needy monasteries, more especially because the clerks on whose behalf they wished to exercise their rights of patronage were, on the whole, more interested in obtaining benefices south of the Tees than those in the bishopric. There is, indeed, more than one pointer to the conclusion that the interest of the magnates in the secular clergy and their benefices within the bishopric was declining /

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[1] See, for example, the appropriation of Ovingham and Alston to Hexham priory. (R.H., ff. 147v-149v; 151v-153v.)

[2] Cf. Baskerville, English monks and the suppression of the monasteries Lond., 1937, pp. 25-29.

declining during our period.[1] And although the Northumberland County History, as we have just seen,[2] is inclined to ascribe the complaint of St. George's College, Windsor (that the parish of its appropriated rectory of Simonburn cost more to provide for than it produced in revenue) to the need for an excuse for the transfer of the advowson to the Duke of Gloucester, the attitude of the college may have had more to it than the provision of an official "front". In any case the mere fact that the complaint was considered worthy of advancing - even by way of an excuse - is not without significance. If taken at its face value it forces us to ask just how much benefit a monastery would gain from the appropriation of a church in the diocese of Durham. The broad outline of the normal arrangements for the disposal of the revenues of appropriated churches have been set out often enough,[3] and in the diocese of Durham they were no different from anywhere else: they varied in detail, naturally enough, from place to place. A good enough example is provided by the 1342 ordination by Bishop Bury of the vicarage of Chatton, the rectory of which had been appropriated to Alnwick Abbey since 1234.[4] It was made with the agreement of both the abbey and the incumbent vicar, Richard de Vescy, and stated that the vicarage should remain in the gift of the bishop[5] but /

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1 See below, pp. 459-460.

2 See above, p. 177.

3 E.g. Hamilton Thompson, English clergy, pp. 116-119.

4 S.S. cxix, p. 149.

5 Not the normal practice in the diocese; usually the vicarage was in /

but that the vicar should receive all obventions, lesser tithes, all revenues and proceeds pertaining to the church and its chapels except the garbal[1] tithes and the land of Doddington; the vicar should also enjoy in perpetuity "unum mansum competens." All garbal tithes pertaining to the church and its chapels were appropriated to the abbot and convent. The vicar appointed by the bishop was to reside and carry out all the normal duties attached to his office.

The appropriating house, in fact, gained directly from the possession of a church; it stood to that church in the position of rector and accordingly received the revenues of the rectory, from which it had to provide for a stipend for a perpetual vicar and from which a part was usually deducted (obventions, lesser tithes, etc., as above) to contribute to the vicar's portion; usually it also had the gift of the vicarage to dispose of, which would normally be a less valuable benefice than a rectory. On the other hand, the patron, lay or ecclesiastical, of an unappropriated church, had no part of its spiritual revenue, although he enjoyed the right of presenting to an unencumbered rectory. Thus in most cases the value /

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in the gift of the appropriating house, and, in fact, the abbey seems to have presented on most occasions notwithstanding the above arrangement. (See below, vol. 2, under Chatton.)

[1] I.e. greater tithes or tithes of grain. (cf. J. Dowden, The mediaeval church in Scotland, Glasgow, 1910, p. 65.)

value of a parish to a patron in terms of the influence over appointment which he obtained from it had to be weighed against its value in terms of the revenues which would accrue to a religious house which appropriated its church.

In the diocese of Durham and especially in its northern and western districts the balance seems to have tipped decisively in favour of appropriation. The less valuable benefices of a sparsely populated and turbulent border area, far from the ecclesiastical centres of London, Canterbury, Oxford and Cambridge, were not eagerly sought after by highly qualified clerks from the schools, the law or administration. Thus the amount of patronage which the advowson owners of such benefices could dispense was restricted, and would probably have enabled them to place only the lesser grades of their dependent clerks - those who sought their patronage because they were of local birth rather than because they were fitted to serve as lawyers or administrators. In order to satisfy an able clergyman his patron would either have to appoint him to a benefice south of the Tees, or persuade an ecclesiastical patron to give him some valuable benefice either within the diocese of Durham or elsewhere.

In these circumstances the lay patron might well consider it worth his while to transfer his patronage from individual clerks to a more permanent religious foundation by alienating his advowson to a monastery. In addition to possible rewards post mortem, he would in any case enjoy the gratitude of the monastery while he remained /

remained alive and might informally exercise his influence to have it provide his less exalted clerical proteges to its rectories or vicarages. On the other hand, the monastery, if it appropriated the rectory as it usually did, gained most of the revenues of the church, small though they may have been in our period. Poverty, after all, is relative, and if the parish churches of Northumberland were poor, so were the monasteries.

But the poverty of most of the churches was not the only cause of the transfer of advowsons from lay to ecclesiastical hands. Although the churches of Northumberland were not extraordinarily poor nor undesirable before the Scottish wars of the 14th century, the bulk of the transfers of patronage were over before 1300[1] - which meant, among other things, that they had become effective before the royal efforts to control the disposal of property to the church had produced the Statute of Mortmain (1279).[2] An additional spur to alienation was the greater concentration of ecclesiastical interests within the diocese. That is to say, while the most important families of the bishopric held lands and had /

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[1] The figures for the donations of churches to ecclesiastical from lay patrons are as follows:

Dates	Archdeaconry of Northumberland	Archdeaconry of Durham	Total
1066–1200	22	15	37
1201–1300	11	1	12
1301–1540	7	1	8

[2] The "Statutum de Viris Religiosis" - to give it its formal title - is printed in Stubbs, Select Charters, 9th ed., pp. 451–2.

had important interests to the south of the Tees; the possessions of the religious houses were - except in the case of Durham priory - nearly exclusively local. The church, therefore, had the greater incentive to cultivate its local interests. Moreover, once a monastery - or for that matter a college, bishop or archdeacon - had acquired a church, it was exceedingly rare for it to be returned to lay hands: the clergy were extremely retentive, which was, of course, the point behind Mortmain. During our period only one example of the alienation of an advowson from the church to the laity occurred in the diocese: the disappropriation of Simonburn rectory from St. George's College, Windsor, and its acquisition by the Duke of Gloucester, and in this case the intention was that it should be used by the Duke to augment the revenues of his proposed new collegiate church of Barnard Castle.[1]

As we are dealing with the late mediaeval period it is perhaps justifiable to neglect for practical purposes the tradition of pious donation to the Durham church in the name of St. Cuthbert which seems to have provided the impetus for the original and largely pre-Conquest grants of lands and churches which formed the core of the possessions of the Durham church. Nevertheless, this background of reverence for St. Cuthbert's church was undoubtedly one of the main stabilising factors in the diocese during the whole of the middle ages and should not be entirely disregarded. It helped to maintain that current of opinion which in the long run both produced /

[1] See above, p. 177.

produced the donations to the church and then prevented attempts to abrogate them or undo their effect.

The twenty-one ecclesiastical patrons who had by the early 16th century gathered the fruits of these donations into their hands have been listed already.[1] Ten of them belonged to the diocese of Durham itself and had the patronage of 75 per cent of the benefices which were in their possession. Five of the remaining eleven were Yorkshire monasteries; three were within the diocese of Carlisle, and included its bishop. Thus only three - the Oxford colleges and St. Albans Abbey - were in the southern province of the English church.

For convenience, the ten patrons of the diocese of Durham may be divided into seven groups for closer study; (i) the bishop of Durham (ii) the priory of Durham (iii) the Benedictine priory of Tynemouth (iv) the Premonstratensian houses (v) the Augustinian houses (vi) the college of Staindrop (vii) the hospitals of Gretham and Sherburn.

(i) The bishop of Durham.

By the end of the 14th century and from then until the dissolution, the bishop of Durham normally presented to thirty-four of the churches in the diocese. His is by far the most complicated patronage which we shall have to consider, for he exercised it in four capacities. First, he presented to eighteen rectories on roughly /

[1] See above, p. 173.

roughly the same terms as any lay patron would present to benefices in his gift. True, the bishop's rights in these churches were the result of donations made to St. Cuthbert in the 10th-12th centuries and did not stem from the foundation of the churches by the bishop; but by the later middle ages these presentations were regarded as part of the bishop's feudal assets: temporalia which sede vacante passed to neither the prior and convent of Durham nor the archbishop of York - the authorities which contested for the spiritualia during vacancies in the see - but to the king,[1] in the same way as the properties and rights of any deceased lay tenant-in-chief would revert, prior to the enfeoffment of his heir.

When the bishop came to the act of presenting to these benefices - as indeed to all other benefices in his gift - he assumed a unique character and one step in the normal process of appointment was, in effect, omitted. If a lay or ecclesiastical patron - not being a bishop - wanted to appoint a clerk to a benefice in his gift, he first presented the applicant to the bishop-in-ordinary for institution. The bishop should thereupon have the candidate examined as to his fitness for the position, and, if satisfied, send to him his letter of institution, at the same time sending to the appropriate archdeacon, rural dean or some other commissary a letter requesting him to induct the prospective incumbent to the benefice.[2] But a bishop who had the gift of the benefice he wished to /

[1] E.g. C.P.R. 1388-91, p. 191; ibid. 1317-21, 216; R.P.D. i, pp. 184-5.

[2] E.g. S.S. cxlvii, p. 126; P.C.R. v, ff. 140, 262v, 264v; R.T. f. 25.

to fill would not present a clerk to himself for institution; instead he collated the candidate to the church - a process which telescoped presentation and institution - and thereupon issued a mandate of induction.[1] Thus a patron other than the bishop-in-ordinary was compelled formally to submit his choice of candidate to the bishop for approval; while the bishop's choice was not submissible to any higher authority.

Secondly, the bishop of Durham presented - or, to be more accurate, collated - to the five collegiate parish churches (founded before our period begins) by virtue of his patronage over their canonries and prebends. The cures of souls in the parishes of Bishop Auckland, Chester-le-Street and Lanchester were served by the deans of the collegiate churches, who were also canons and prebendaries and the heads of the colleges. In the collegiate church of Norton the head of the chapter, who was also responsible for the cure of souls of the parish, was styled vicar; while in Darlington this position was also held by a vicar until Bishop Neville revised the constitution of the college in 1439, when the benefice was converted into a deanery.[2] The right to present to all of the canonries and prebends in these collegiate churches belonged to the bishop. They formed a group of 43 benefices in all /

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[1] E.g. R.H. ff. 64v, 79; R.P.D. iii, p. 414.

[2] See below, vol. 2, and Hamilton Thompson, Collegiate churches of Durham, pp. 33-42. The assessment of the deanery or vicarage in each of these colleges was much higher than that of the other prebends.

all, although only the five heads of the colleges had cure of souls, and thus at this point we are concerned only with them. It might be noted in passing, however, that the other 38 prebends, incurring as they did no parochial responsibility, and some of them being comparatively wealthy, were among the most popular of all the benefices in the bishop's collation among place-hunting clergy desirous of holding in plurality benefices without cure of souls which were therefore canonically "compatible" and made few demands of residence. So far as methods of collation to the collegiate churches were concerned, neither the deaneries nor the vicarages, nor for that matter the prebends, were in any different position from the rectories which were in the episcopal gift; although no clerk who already held a benefice with cure of souls could legally be appointed without dispensation to a rectory, vicarage or deanery; while he might receive a canonry and prebend.

Thirdly, the bishop, naturally enough, appointed or collated his chief administrative lieutenants, the archdeacons of Durham and Northumberland, and by virtue of these appointments he provided the rectors of Easington and Howick for these benefices were respectively attached to each of the archdeaconries. In effect they were appropriated to the archdeaconries but no perpetual vicarage was established for either parish, and the day-to-day spiritual duties were entrusted by each archdeacon to a locum tenens who /

who was appointed and could be removed without formality. He was paid a small stipend by his employer, who, of course, received the bulk of the parochial revenues.

Fourthly and lastly, the bishop collated to the vicarages of nine churches whose rectories were appropriated to religious houses. In so doing he acted in his simple capacity as diocesan ordinary, and he had no other rights over these churches or their revenues. We have already seen how from the 13th century the bishop had been compelled by canon law to ordain perpetual vicarages for the cure of souls in parishes the churches of which were appropriated, and further to ensure that the appropriating houses provided a suitable stipend for the incumbent vicars.[1] When he retained the right to present to these nine vicarages after the appropriation of the churches, he carried his interest in them to its extreme. Most of the arrangements whereby the bishop retained these presentations were made in the late 13th or early 14th centuries, and some at least seem to have reflected the bishop's anxiety lest the economic straits to which some of the monasteries were being reduced at this time might incline them to neglect their responsibilities towards the vicarages. Hodgson suggests that when Bishop Hatfield appropriated the church of Kirkwhelpington to the Cistercian abbey of Newminster in 1349, he retained the right to appoint to the vicarage rather than allow the monastery to delegate the service of the cure of souls to one of its monks - perhaps the cheapest way /

[1] See above, p. 144, especially note 3.

way in which an appropriating house could provide for the parochial cure, but a way which involved a breach of the rules of most monastic orders.[1]

With two exceptions, all of the religious houses which were prevented from appointing vicars to these nine churches were situated in the diocese of Durham. They were the priory of Tynemouth, which had appropriated the churches of Haltwhistle and Woodhorn, the abbey of Newminster which held Kirkwhelpington and Stannington, the abbey of Alnwick which held Wooler, and the hospital of Sherburn to which the church of Kelloe was appropriated. The two exceptions were the priory of Lanercost in Cumberland which held Mitford, and the abbey of St. Albans which held Coniscliffe and Hartburn.[2] Lanercost was one of the monasteries which was worst hit by the Scottish wars, and the appropriation was made in 1307.[3] St. Albans was, of course, in a different position. One of the wealthiest and most secure monasteries in England, which enjoyed unrivalled royal patronage,[4] there was no economic reason why it should not fulfil its obligations towards the cures of souls attached to its appropriated churches. On the other hand relations between the bishop of Durham and the abbey of St. Albans had not been /

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1 Hodgson, History of Northumberland, II, i, p. 203; cf. Hamilton Thompson, English clergy, pp. 119-120.

2 See below, vol. 2.

3 Hodgson, op.cit., II, ii, p. 32.

4 Cf. Dugdale, Monasticon, New ed., ii, pp. 178-255, especially pp. 217-218, for royal patrons and donors.

been of the happiest ever since the settlement of Tynemouth by monks from St. Albans had deprived the church of Durham of this important monastery late in the 11th century.[1] A settlement was reached in 1174 when Bishop Pudsey and the priory of Durham surrendered their claims on Tynemouth by charter to St. Albans in return for the churches of Bywell St. Peter and Edlingham.[2] Nevertheless further disputes arose over both proprietary rights in churches and episcopal visitation of the priory of Tynemouth, and it was not until the middle of the 13th century (c. 1252) that the bishop of Durham surrendered all right to the churches of Hartburn and Eglingham. A few years later, in 1256, William de Greystoke filed a suit against the abbey in the bishop's court for the advowson of Coniscliffe,[3] which was not terminated until 1315, when Bishop Kellawe agreed that St. Albans should keep the appropriation of the church.[4] In view of these somewhat strained relations between St. Albans and several interests - lay and ecclesiastical - in Durham, it is perhaps not surprising that the bishop kept in his own hands the right to collate to the vicarages of both Coniscliffe and Hartburn.[5]

The table on page 173 clearly shows that the bishop had in his hands more advowsons than any other patron of diocesan parish churches /

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1 N.C.H. viii, pp. 46-47.
2 Ibid., p. 63.
3 Ibid., pp. 73-74.
4 Surtees, History of Durham, iii, p. 380.
5 Ibid.; and see below, vol. 2, s.n. Hartburn.

churches; but even so it does far less than justice to his pre-eminence among all competitors, lay or clerical, individuals or corporations. In the early 16th century the bishop collated to 34 out of 115 parish churches in the diocese; in 1535, according to the Valor Ecclesiasticus, the total annual value of all these benefices to their incumbents was in the region of £2,250, and the total value of the 34 in episcopal gift was £1,218:1:6;[1] that is, about 54 per cent. Two centuries earlier, out of 119 parish churches the bishop had the gift of 29, and out of what might be called £3,400 worth of patronage he controlled £1,259:4:0 - about 37 per cent.[2] Nor is this the end of the story. These figures apply only to rectories, vicarages and deaneries with cure of souls. The bishop - like most of the other patrons - presented to other types of benefices in the diocese: chantries, chapels, schools, etc. Most of these were of small value and, as has already /

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[1] It is necessary at this point to repeat the caveat, which has previously been inserted in this essay, that these figures should be regarded not so much as absolute quantities, but as the raw material for comparisons and percentages. I am acutely aware that the figures in official valuations during the middle ages frequently misrepresented the actual value of benefices, often for the very good reason that such values, dependent as they usually were on harvests, variable donations, etc., were impossible to fix. As Dr. Rose Graham has pointed out with reference to the Taxation of Pope Nicholas, vicarages were assessed not on the minimum stipend of the vicars, but on how much they would realise in rent if they were farmed; the valuations provided a basis for calculating the probable returns of a tax rather than an absolutely accurate account of clerical income. (Graham, The taxation of Pope Nicholas IV. (E.H.R. xxiii, pp. 443-446.))

[2] Calculated from figures in Taxation of Pope Nicholas.

already been explained, they have been omitted from general consideration in this thesis.[1] But the bishop of Durham presented to one group of benefices without cure which must be included in any assessment of his importance as a patron: namely, the thirty-eight canonries and prebends of the five collegiate churches of Auckland, Chester-le-Street, Darlington, Lanchester, and Norton. In 1291 these prebends were valued at £515 in the Taxatio Papae Nicholai and in 1535 at about £200 in the Valor Ecclesiasticus, and if these sums are included in our calculations, they bring the bishop's proportion of diocesan ecclesiastical patronage in financial terms to something like 45 per cent in 1291 and 58 per cent in 1535.

These percentages are perhaps the most arresting of all possible illustrations of the bishop's predominance among the patrons of the Durham churches; at the end of our period the value of his direct patronage exceeded that of all the other patrons, lay and ecclesiastical, put together, and even in the early 14th century he controlled about half of the patronage which was in ecclesiastical hands. Moreover, the drop in the total value of benefices with cure from about £3,400 in 1291 to about £2,250 in 1535 was not reflected in the figures for the episcopal benefices. Again, of course, we are concerned with comparative quantities, and it should be remembered that the decline in the value of the pound sterling over our period means that the figures even for the bishop's patronage /

[1] See above, pp. 112–113.

patronage represent a decline in its absolute value. The figure for the prebends of the collegiate churches provides, however, a sharp contrast to the general evidence of comparative prosperity among the churches in the bishop's gift. As a matter of fact, the drop in value between 1291 and 1535 is not quite so catastrophic as the figure of £515 set against £200 implies; for redistribution of the income of some of these churches, and especially the reconstitution of Auckland and Darlington under Bishop Neville, resulted in the transfer of a considerable proportion of the revenue from the prebendaries to the deans, and if the distribution of revenues had been the same in 1535 as in 1291 the total value of the prebends would have been nearly £300.[1] Even so, it is a fact that the worth of these prebends sharply depreciated for reasons which are not altogether clear, although probably the lengthy absences of most of the prebendaries from the diocese together with the smallness of many of the estates and chapelries which constituted their prebends[2] did not make for very efficient exploitation of the land and its produce.

At this point it will be useful to refer to the general treatment of the values of the benefices in relation to their geographical position in chapter 3, section 1,[3] and to map 1 which shows the patronage of parish churches in 1535. The former indicates that /

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1 See the figures in volume 2.

2 These estates and chapelries are perhaps most conveniently treated in Surtees, op.cit., passim.

3 See above, pp. 101-102.

that those parish churches which most consistently retained their value over our period were situated broadly speaking in the valleys of the lower Tyne and the Wear; while the latter shows that it was in exactly these areas that much of the most valuable episcopal patronage was exercised. Ryton, Whickham and Gateshead on the south bank of the Tyne shared in the relative prosperity which followed in the wake of the industrial and commercial activity in this area of coal and iron mines. To the south these parishes were bordered by the large deaneries of Chester-le-Street and Lanchester and the rectory of Washington, and these in their turn joined the parishes of the Wear valley: Bishop Wearmouth and Houghton-le-Spring at the river's lowest reaches and, upwards from its curve at Bishop Auckland, the two large hill parishes of Wolsingham and Stanhope, the former of which was contiguous with the deanery of Auckland itself. Thus the main group of benefices in the bishop's gift formed roughly a letter 'C' on the map, starting from the area of Wearmouth and Tynemouth in the north-east corner of the palatinate and following south-west along the Pennine foothills to Weardale and then east-south-east along the Wear to Auckland. While the northern parishes on the curve were in a position to profit from the industry and trade of Tyneside, those situated further south were in the area of the iron and lead mining industries which grew up in the later middle ages in the bishop's forest of Weardale.[1]

The /

[1] See above pp. 12-14.

The more scattered episcopal benefices in the far south of the palatinate, Sedgefield, Elwick, Redmarshall, Winston, Haughton-le-Skerne, Norton and Darlington, all suffered some decline in value during our period, although the monetary value of Staindrop and Cockfield both increased. These were all in predominantly agricultural areas of arable farming and their condition reflects the diminishing returns on the more traditional methods of exploiting natural resources.

Apart from Kelloe and Coniscliffe, all those appropriated churches, the vicarages of which were in the bishop's gift, were situated in the archdeaconry of Northumberland. They divide fairly naturally into two groups: the three fairly large parishes of Haltwhistle, Kirkwhelpington and Hartburn in the western hills, and the smaller ones of Mitford, Woodhorn and Stannington in the south-east of the county. Wooler in the far north was of rather less value than the others in 1535; while the geographical situation of Woodhorn, Stannington and Mitford must have made them rather more attractive than those in the west, although there was no great difference in value between the two groups. The smaller area occupied by the south-eastern group was offset by the industrial development in this area during our period.[1] The small rectory of Howick on the east coast, which was attached to the archdeaconry of Northumberland /

[1] See above p. 101; the valuations of these churches will be found in volume 2, below.

Northumberland, was of comparatively little value.[1]

These vicarages accounted for a relatively small part of the total value of the bishop's patronage. They should not be neglected when assessing this patronage, but the bishop collated to them, as we have seen, not so much for the increase in influence which it brought him, but rather in order to safeguard the interests of the parishioners and of the vicars themselves; he acted in his capacity as bishop, not as lord and patron.

This was hardly true of his collations to the wealthy rectories of county Durham, many of which came into the hands of important members of the bishop's household and other clerks for whom he wished to provide. In addition to his influence as patron, the bishop's position in county Durham was founded upon his authority as feudal superior of the palatinate, and in this position he had no rival. The lay families who held lands in the palatinate under him had no chance of uniting their estates into the large solid blocks of territory which characterised the Northumberland lordships of the Ogles, Percies and Umfravilles. By far the most important magnate in the palatinate was the head of the great house of Neville whose seat was at Raby Castle in the parish of Staindrop. The family estates in county Durham included lands in the parishes of Staindrop, Winston, Darlington, Sedgefield, Boldon, Kelloe, Stanhope, Auckland and Wolsingham all of which were in the bishop's patronage /

[1] £16:0:0 in 1291; in 1530 the archdeaconry including Howick was valued at £36:13:4. (See below, vol. 2, under Northumberland.)

patronage.[1] In spite of their wealth and power the Nevilles remained the feudal inferiors of the bishops for their lands in the palatinate, no matter how powerful they might be on their estates and lordships south of the Tees as tenants-in-chief of the king. As has already been suggested, the very power of such families as the Nevilles in the south and midlands of England tended to divert their attention from the bishopric, especially when that power went with political influence at the royal court.

The Neville estates were all in the south of the palatinate; in the parishes of the bishop's gift in the north and east there was no such outstanding family, although the Lumleys had estates in the parishes of Easington, Houghton-le-Spring, Bishop Wearmouth, Chester-le-Street and, further south, in Sedgefield.[2] The other chief families of this area were the Hiltons, Conyers, Claxtons, Rhodes, Bowes, Herons, Swalwells and Grays. They were important, but by no means important enough to challenge the authority of the lord palatine in secular, and still less in ecclesiastical affairs. Their direct patronage, when they had any, was usually exercised in appointments of chaplains to more or less private chapels, such as the notable run of appointments right through our period by the Lords of Hilton to the chapel of Hilton in the parish of Monk Wearmouth.[3]

Even /

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1 Surtees, History of Durham, ii-iv, passim.

2 Ibid. i-iii, passim.

3 Eleven such appointments are recorded in the archives at Durham Cathedral: Cart. iv, ff. 69-70v; R.P. i, ff. 20v-21; P.C.R. V, ff. 75v, 97v, 241v.

Even during the period of the dissolution of the monasteries, when ecclesiastical patronage was reverting with the lands to the laity, very few of the bishop's churches in the palatinate passed from his hands; only, in fact, the churches which replaced the dissolved colleges of Chester-le-Street, Darlington and Lanchester, the patronage of which passed to the crown.[1] After 1561, the curacy of Darlington was in the gift of the earls of Darlington.[2] Moreover, of the nine vicarages to which the bishop collated, only one, that of Woodhorn in Northumberland, the rectory of which was appropriated to Tynemouth Priory, was alienated from his patronage at the dissolution; the gift of this benefice passed to the crown.[3] The bishop's success in maintaining intact the bulk of his ecclesiastical patronage at this period of radical redistribution of church property and at a time when most of his lay authority as lord palatine was being stripped from him - this success is perhaps the most conclusive evidence of the strength of his position as the wielder of the most extensive ecclesiastical patronage in the bishopric.

(ii) The prior and convent of Durham.

Of the twenty-two churches[4] which were in the patronage of the priory /

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1 Surtees, op.cit., ii, p. 143; iii, p. 364; ii, p. 311.

2 Ibid., iii, p. 364.

3 Hodgson, op.cit., II, ii, p. 182.

4 These are exclusive, it will be recalled, of churches such as Monkwearmouth, the cure of which was served by monks of the priory's cell situated there. It must also be remembered that the /

priory of Durham at the end of our period, six were rectories and the other sixteen vicarages, the rectories of these having been appropriated to the convent. Fourteen were situated in the archdeaconry of Durham and the other eight, including one of the rectories - Meldon - were in Northumberland. Little need be said about the priory's normal method of exercising this patronage. Clerks whom it wished to appoint were simply presented to the bishop who formally instituted them and ordered their induction after due examination.

The advowsons of these twenty-two churches were acquired by the prior and convent in one of three ways. In the first place, fifteen of them were donated by the laity to the Church of St. Cuthbert, and as this Church had for practical purposes been divided between the bishop and the prior and convent, these fifteen churches formed part of the convent's share of its property. Secondly, churches were gifted, four directly to the priory of Durham and one - Berwick - to its cell of Coldingham, by their original lay owners. Thirdly, the churches of Bywell St. Peter and Edlingham were obtained by the priory in 1174 from the abbey of St. Albans in return for the abandonment of the priory's claims on the monastery of Tynemouth, a cell of St. Albans, and its property.[1]

The core of the first group of fifteen advowsons was formed when /

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the priory of Durham had the advowson of churches in Yorkshire and Lincolnshire which are not considered in this thesis.

[1] For this exchange see N.C.H. vi, p. 103 and vii, p. 144.

when William de Carileph, the first Norman bishop of Durham, gave the churches of Aycliffe, St. Oswald in Durham, Hesleden, Norham, Pittington and Kirkmerrington to the priory; while Muggleswick and St. Mary in the North Bailey, Durham, were also detached at an early period from St. Cuthbert's patrimony by the prior and convent. Bedlington, Billingham, Dalton-le-Dale and Heighington, although in the possession of the Church of Durham since before the Conquest, were not relinquished to the priory by the bishops until the late 12th and early 13th centuries. Dinsdale and Meldon, on the other hand, went to the priory very shortly after their original donations to St. Cuthbert's Church by Ralph Surteys, the Elder, and Roger Bertram respectively, the one during the episcopate of Pudsey (1153-94), the other during that of Stichill (1260-74). The advowson of Bishop Middleham had been relinquished to the priory in 1146 by the nephew of Bishop Flambard, but the grant was ignored by succeeding bishops, until in 1278, Bishop Insula appropriated the church, not directly to the priory of Durham, but to its cell at Finchale; in practice, the presentation was in the hands of the Durham monks.

Of the four churches which were given directly by the laity to the prior and convent, only Kimblesworth may have been acquired before the 12th century. Ellingham was presented by Nicholas de Greville in the early 12th century, and Branxton by Ralph de Branxton towards the end of the century. Edmundbyres was probably acquired from the Bruntoft family during the 13th century.[1]

The /

[1] The information in the present and preceding paragraphs was obtained /

The church of Holy Trinity in Berwick seems to have been been transferred during the 12th century from the monks of Kelso to the cell of Durham Priory at Coldingham.[1] As in the case of the church of Bishop Middleham (appropriated to the cell of Finchale) the advowson of the vicarage of Berwick was in the gift of Durham Priory until the end of our period; the appropriation of Coldingham to the Chapel Royal of the Scottish kings at Stirling does not seem to have affected the advowson of Berwick.[2]

Some lacunae in the valuations, especially those of the late 13th and 14th centuries, make it impossible to be precise about the total value of these advowsons. In round figures, however, it was probably approaching £200 at the valuation of 1291 and about £20 more in 1535.[3] Thus the value of the priory's patronage of parish churches was about one sixth of that which was at the bishop's disposal. Nevertheless the priory of Durham was second only to the bishop as a dispenser of such patronage within the diocese.

It is as well, however, to restate clearly the fact that these financial figures did not represent the value of the twenty two churches to the priory of Durham itself. On the contrary they show the collective remuneration of the clergy who served the parochial /

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obtained from Surtees, op.cit., Hodgson, op.cit., and N.C.H. under the titles of the respective churches.

1 Cf. John Scott, Berwick-upon-Tweed, Lond., 1888, p. 335.

2 See vol. 2 below.

3 Calculated from figures in the 1291 and 1535 valuations which are given in volume 2. As usual, changes in the value of money over the period should be borne in mind.

parochial cures of souls. From the six unappropriated churches, indeed, the prior and convent would receive nothing except the power which stemmed from the right of presenting the rectors; but from the sixteen which were appropriated the rectorial dues were collected by the priory which from them made to the vicar an allowance either in money or by assigning to him certain parts of these dues - for example, the lesser tithes.[1] In 1222 the Council of Oxford decreed 5 marks (£3:6:8) a year as the minimum stipend for a vicar,[2] but only one of the priory's vicarages (Branxton) was valued at this low figure in 1535, and most of the vicarages were valued fairly highly.[3] Indeed, since the parishes of the unappropriated churches were small, the rectories of these churches were valued at less than the figures recorded for most of the vicarages attached to the appropriated rectories. In 1535, the most valuable of the unappropriated rectories was entered at £6:11:4 in the Valor Ecclesiasticus; while the vicarage of the wealthy parish of Aycliffe was at this period rated at £16. The priory did not, therefore, lose much by its failure to appropriate the rectories of the smaller churches, the revenues of which would have done little more than provide for a vicar's minimum stipend. This, indeed, was probably why it did not appropriate them. The wealthier /

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1 A good enough example is provided by the ordination by Bishop Bury of the vicarage of Chatton, quoted above on pp. 180-181.

2 Wilkins, Concilia, i, p. 587.

3 According to Sir Thomas Duffus Hardy, the standard stipend rose as the value of money decreased and it was £8 in the reign of Henry VIII. (R.P.D. iii, preface, p. lxxxix.)

wealthier churches, however, were invariably appropriated and provided much of the priory's revenue.

The proportion of the parochial revenues which the priory paid to its vicar varied very much from parish to parish, as indeed was the case in most of England.[1] According to the 1291 valuation figures, the average proportion of the revenues received by vicars of the priory's churches was just over 18 per cent: a little less than a fifth. Hartridge quotes one third of the revenues as a common proportion for vicars during the middle ages,[2] but his own pages on the subject reveal the many exceptions to this rule. Among the priory of Durham's churches - to state the two extremes - the rectory of Branxton was valued at £10:13:4 in 1291, its vicarage at £4 - nearly two fifths; while the rectory of Norham was valued at £133:6:8, and the vicar received only £13:6:8 - exactly one tenth. These proportions seem to bear out Hartridge's contention[3] that "if a rectory was poor the vicar shared its poverty, but if it was rich, he did not proportionately share its riches." On the whole this seems to have been true of the priory's churches in the diocese of Durham. Nevertheless the size of many of the priory's appropriated parishes and the wealth of their churches made it possible for the monks to retain considerably more than two-thirds of the revenues while still providing a /

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[1] For a general treatment of this subject see R.A.R. Hartridge, A history of vicarages in the middle ages, pp. 41-45, 77-89.

[2] Ibid., pp. 42-43.

[3] Ibid., p. 84.

a large enough stipend to tempt clerks to become their vicars and undertake the onerous cure of souls of these large parishes.[1]

The geographical positions of the priory's parishes do not admit of the fairly logical groupings relating the value of the advowsons to geography, industry, agriculture, and trade which were applied to the churches in the episcopal gift. The most homogeneous group of parishes in the gift of the monks consisted of those in or verging on the valley of the Wear from where the river turns northwards at Auckland to its north-east swing at Chester-le-Street. Some of the most valuable of the priory's vicarages were to be found in this group: Aycliffe, Heighington and Kirkmerrington in the south and Pittington in the north. The small parishes of Kimblesworth and St. Mary in the North Bailey, Durham, were of little value and the churches were not appropriated. To complete this group, which numbered eight parishes in all, we must add Bishop Middleham and St. Oswald, Durham.

Most of the priory's other fourteen churches were fairly widely scattered throughout the diocese, and no grouping can be anything but artificial and a matter of convenience. The four vicarages of Billingham, Hesleden, Dalton-le-Dale, in county Durham, and Bedlington in Northumberland had in common the fact that they were /

[1] Dr. Hartridge might also be consulted on this point. (Ibid., p. 85, where he states that "a striking feature of the northern (English) dioceses is the fewness of rectories valued at less than 10 marks, and the smallness of the number of chapels separately taxed. The north always has been a country of large parishes and many chapels, so it is obvious that the large assessments represented rectories or vicarages with many subordinate chapels and many duties.")

were on the coast. In 1535 the values of these vicarages varied from the high figure of £13:6:8 for Bedlington, which was situated within the mining area around Tynemouth,[1] through the £11:3:0 of Billingham at the mouth of the Tees to the more moderate figures of £7:12:4 and £6:0:7 for Hesleden and Dalton respectively.

Branxton, Edlingham, Ellingham and Norham were all in the far northern border area, while Berwick was as often as not on the Scottish side of the border. Naturally the disturbances of war resulted in great fluctuations in the values of these benefices during our period.[2] By 1535 Norham vicarage had settled at the high valuation of £15:6:8;[3] but the figures for the other vicarages were much smaller, Branxton - a very small parish - rating, as we have seen, the minimum "statutory" stipend of £3:6:8; while Edlingham and Ellingham were valued at £6:14:4 and £6:5:8 respectively. The value of the vicarage of Berwick was not recorded in the Valor Ecclesiasticus, but in 1535 the priory of Durham was said to be receiving £33 a year as the appropriating house, so that, unless the vicar's portion was much smaller in Berwick than the average in the priory's churches, the vicarage must have been worth at least £5 to £6.

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[1] See above, p. 101.

[2] See below, vol. 2.

[3] The high figure is no doubt partly explicable by the fact that all of the tithes of Norhamshire - a jurisdictional peculiar of the priory of Durham - were collected for the prior and convent by their proctor and the vicar's stipend up to the Reformation was entirely pecuniary. (Raine, North Durham, pp. 265-6, 282.)

Of the other churches in the gift of the monks of Durham, Dinsdale in the far south of the diocese was a small parish whose rectory was never appropriated; it was valued at £4:11:4 in 1535. Muggleswick and Edmundbyres - the rectories of which were also unappropriated - were adjacent parishes lying in the hills to the north of Stanhope, and neither was of great value. In Northumberland, Bywell St. Peter, to the south-east of Corbridge, was a large parish, the vicarage of which was valued at the high figure of £9:18:0. Further to the north, the small parish of Meldon was served by a humble vicarage worth £4:7:8 according to the Valor Ecclesiasticus.

Most of the priory's churches were less favourably situated than those of the bishop; and although there was probably no great difference between the average value of the priory benefices and those in the bishop's gift, the situation of most of the latter in county Durham, where many were small in area but comparatively highly populated and profitable, made them on the whole a more tempting prize for the benefice-hunting clerk - quite apart from the obvious fact that the priory's appropriation of its more wealthy rectories, left to the priest only the vicar's stipend (substantial though that often was, as we have seen). Thus the considerable sums accruing to the priory from its appropriations were partially offset by its loss of the influence of patronage. In spite of this, however, the worth of many of the priory's livings to the clergy is vouched for by the importance of many of the names which

are to be found among the lists of their incumbents.

Their worth to the cathedral church of Durham is suggested by the fact that in 1540, when Henry VIII's dissolution of the monasteries converted it from a Benedictine convent into a chapter of secular canons, it succeeded, in spite of the acquisitiveness of the king, his officials and the nobility, in retaining all but two of its advowsons in the diocese of Durham. The rectory of St. Mary in the North Bailey, Durham, eventually passed from the hands of the crown into the gift of the archdeacons of Northumberland;[1] while by 1596 the vicarage of Bishop Middleham had been leased by the king to John Warde, gentleman:[2] neither of them was of great value.[3] It is worth noting, too, that in the years immediately preceding the dissolution it was very unusual for the monks to allow the actual exercise of their patronage in Durham diocese to pass out of their own hands even for single turns. In this period, as lay influence on the church was patently increasing and many of the monasteries were "selling out" to local magnates and gentry their lands, advowsons and the revenues of their churches, by means, usually, of leases,[4] the priory of Durham seems to have alienated its right of presentation on two occasions only. In 1537 /

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1 Surtees, op.cit., iv, pt. 2, p. 41.

2 Ibid., iii, p. 8.

3 The Valor Ecclesiasticus rated the rectory of St. Mary at £5 and the vicarage of Bishop Middleham at £4:19:0 net.

4 Cf. Baskerville, op.cit., pp. 193-200.

1537 the next presentation to the vicarage of Billingham was granted to Robert Hyndmer, dean of Auckland, who exercised it immediately to present his brother Richard, and a little over a year later William Hertborn and George Smythe received a joint grant of the right of next presentation to the vicarage of Kirkmerrington, but there was no vacancy in the benefice until after the dissolution. Both these grants, of course, were for one turn only,[1] and they represent the priory's only relaxation of its hold on its patronage in the diocese of Durham.

Interestingly enough, too, the Hyndmers and the Hertborns and Smyths were not among the leading families in the parishes of the priory. The Cliffords and Greys, with their estates in Ellingham, the Percies, Emeldons and Feltons in Edlingham, the Darcies and Conyers in Branxton and the Herons in Meldon did not intrude their clerks into the churches of these parishes.[2] These were perhaps the most important families who held lands in the priory's parishes; their estates all centred in Northumberland. The families with lands in such palatinate parishes as Aycliffe, Dinsdale, Pittington and Hesleden - Claxtons, Bulmers, Surtees, Daldens, Bowes, Ludworths, Menevills, Eures, Askes and Eshes - were of less consequence, and their estates were usually smaller. In some parishes, such as Middleham, Edmundbyres, Kimblesworth, Muggleswick, and the two Durham /

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[1] F.D.; P.C.R. V, f. 265v; R.T. f. 18v.

[2] N.C.H.; Hodgson, History of Northumberland, passim.

Durham parishes of St. Mary in the North Bailey and St. Oswald, most of the lands had been gathered into the hands of the prior and convent by the later middle ages.[1]

(iii) The Benedictine priory of Tynemouth.

The priory of Tynemouth was the only house of Benedictine monks in the diocese apart from the cathedral of Durham. A cell of the Hertfordshire abbey of St. Albans, it enjoyed from 1384 until the dissolution the appropriation of three parish churches in Northumberland,[2] and in addition the gift of the rectory of Whalton. But partly as a result of its dependence on St. Albans and its rather anomalous position vis-à-vis the all too proximate priory of Durham, the early mediaeval history both of the monastery and of its advowsons was somewhat chequered,[3] and during our period it appointed the incumbents only of the rectory of Whalton and the vicarage of Tynemouth. As we have seen, the vicarages of Halt-whistle, and Woodhorn were filled by direct episcopal collation.[4]

As might be expected, by far the less valuable of the two churches in the priory's gift was the unappropriated rectory of Whalton, which served a small parish in the lowest foothills of the Pennines on the River Blyth. It was valued at £28:9:0 in 1291 and at /

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1 Surtees, op.cit., passim.
2 None in county Durham.
3 N.C.H. viii, pp. 41-92.
4 See above, p. 190.

at £13:0:8 in 1535. On the other hand the large coastal parish of Tynemouth had a rectory valued at £71:12:10 in 1291 (£6:1:2 for the vicarage, which had risen to £24:19:4 in 1535). Moreover, it seems not unlikely that in the valuation of 1291 both the rectory, and to a greater extent the vicarage, were seriously undervalued; for in the next year the former was valued at £111:12:10 net and the latter at 40 marks (£26:13:4).[1] Probably both benefited from the mineral resources of this early mining area and from fishing and salt industries.[2]

The lordship of Tynemouth, even after the forfeiture of the liberty jurisdiction to the crown in 1291,[3] sufficed to maintain the position of the priory of Tynemouth as the chief secular as well as ecclesiastical power in the district, and considerably in advance of such families as the Delavals. There seems to have been little or no lay interference with the priory's rights of presentation during our period, although in 1534 the prior and convent declared that they had granted the next presentation (i.e. one turn only) to Thomas Gray, Thomas Lawson, William Selby and John Selby, gentlemen, jointly and severally; but only on the condition that they agreed to present Oliver Selby. Their candidate, that is to say, had been approved by the monks beforehand, and, in fact, Oliver Selby was instituted in 1540 on the presentation /

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[1] N.C.H. viii, p. 125.
[2] Cf. Ibid., p. 18.
[3] Ibid., pp. 216-218.

presentation of Thomas Lawson.[1] After the dissolution of the priory the advowson of the vicarage remained in the hands of the crown.[2] Nor was there any lay interference in the advowson of Whalton, although this parish contained the powerful barony of Whalton, which was in the hands of the Scrope family from the time of Geoffrey le Scrope of Masham, Chief Justice of King's Bench under Edward III, until it passed to the Dacres in the 16th century.[3] Moreover, only a little over a mile away from Whalton parish church lay Ogle Castle, the seat of the lords of Ogle, as they were from the early 15th century.[4] In fact, the prior and convent alienated their right of presentation only once and then (in 1535) to a notary, William Blythman.[5] After the dissolution the advowson was in royal hands until under Queen Elizabeth it was alienated to the family of Bates of Milburn.[6]

(iv) The Premonstratensian abbeys of Alnwick and Blanchland.

Apart from the abbey churches of Alnwick and Blanchland themselves, which served these two parishes, six parish churches were appropriated to Alnwick Abbey and four to Blanchland. They were all in the archdeaconry of Northumberland, although Bywell St. Andrew lay /

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1 R.T. ff. 21; 29.
2 N.C.H. viii, p. 127.
3 Hodgson, op.cit., II, i, pp. 377-8.
4 Ibid., p. 384.
5 R.T. ff. 23-23v.
6 Hodgson, loc.cit.

lay to the south of the Tyne and verged on the eastern boundary of Hexhamshire. Neither of the two abbeys held any unappropriated parish churches in the diocese, and with the exception of that of Bolam, which was not appropriated to Blanchland until 1359,[1] all the appropriations had been carried out before the beginning of our period.

Alnwick's six parishes may be divided geographically into two groups: Alnham, Chatton, Chillingham and Wooler in the hills of the border and the Till valley; Lesbury and Shilbottle between Alnwick itself and the coast.

The churches of Alnham, Chatton and Chillingham were granted to the abbey by William de Vesci, baron of Alnwick, within forty years of its foundation by his father, Eustace de Vesci, and all three rectories were appropriated in the early 13th century.[2] Wooler was a later gift, and it was not until the early 14th century that the abbey received the advowson from the Graham family, to whom it had passed through the Fords from the Muschamps; the rectory was appropriated in 1313.[3]

Shilbottle and Lesbury were acquired in the 12th century and probably appropriated at an early date, although we have no record of the appropriation of Lesbury. The advowson of Shilbottle was alienated by the founding family of the church, the Tisons; while Lesbury /

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[1] Ibid., pp. 338-40.
[2] N.C.H. xiv, pp. 560, 193-4, 307.
[3] Ibid. xi, pp. 286-9.

Lesbury was a gift of Eustace Fitz-John to Baldwin, his clerk, who became the first abbot of Alnwick, his rectory passing into the hands of his house.[1]

None of these families survived in the male line to the end of the middle ages, and for the greater part of our period the most powerful local families were the two great houses of Percy and Ogle. The townships of Alnham, Chatton and Lesbury, all within the Vesci barony of Alnwick, fell into the hands of the earls of Northumberland; while the manor of Shilbottle, after passing from the Tisons by way of the Hiltons to the Percies in the 14th century, was forfeited to King Henry IV in 1403 and, unlike the majority of the Northumberland estates, remained entailed in the royal family until Edward IV granted it to Robert, Lord Ogle, in 1462. By the thirteen twenties, Chillingham township had fallen into the hands of the Hetons, from whom it passed about 1440 to the lords of Ogle. Wooler was the only one of the six parishes in which neither the Percies nor the Ogles were the predominant landholders by the end of our period; from the Muschamps, through the Fords, Grahams, Huntercombes, Conyers, Meinills, Lilburns, Graystocks and Strangeways, the manor eventually passed - reunited after a good deal of subdivision - to the house of Grey in the 16th century.[2]

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[1] Ibid. ii, pp. 439-40; v, pp. 432-3.

[2] Ibid. ii, v, xi, xiv, in the sections on the parishes of Alnham, Chatton, Chillingham (vol. xiv), Lesbury (ii), Shilbottle (v) and Wooler (xi).

By 1200 the canons of Blanchland - founded by Walter de Bolbec in 1165 - had received from the founding family the advowsons of Bywell St. Andrew, Heddon on the Wall and Kirkharle, all of which were appropriated in the 13th century.[1] The advowson of Bolam, after some vicissitudes in the course of which it was granted ineffectively by King John to the priory of Tynemouth (1204), was for most of the 13th and early 14th centuries in the hands of the families of Raymes, Bekering and Herle until in 1359 the rectory was appropriated to Blanchland by Bishop Hatfield.[2] The four parishes were within no great distance of each other, Bywell and Heddon being on the River Tyne below Corbridge, and Kirkharle and Bolam about ten miles to the north in the foothills south-east of Tynedale.

The families which held most of the lands in these parishes were not so eminent as the Percies and Ogles. By the early 15th century the Bekerings had disposed of their moiety of the barony of Bolam, which was dispersed into several hands.[3] In the other three parishes the Graystocks were perhaps the most important landowners for in the latter half of the 13th century they married into the family of the barons of Bolbec and hence inherited much of the Bolbec lands when the male line became extinct.[4]

In none of these parishes did the canons of Alnwick or Blanchland /

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1 Ibid. vi, p. 241; xiii, p. 58; Hodgson II, i, p. 236.
2 Ibid., pp. 338-40.
3 Ibid., p. 334.
4 N.C.H. xiii, p. 79.

land have the temporal influence which the prior and convent of Durham frequently possessed in those parishes where they held both the advowson of the church and the position of chief tenant of the bishop, sometimes with the power of franchisal jurisdiction. Nevertheless, although their power was restricted to the ecclesiastical sphere, it was not challenged by any of the local magnates, who did not directly interfere with the canons' advowsons by intruding their clerks or by reclaiming any of their alienated rights of presentation. No doubt the fact that most of the original founders' families had become extinct was an important reason for this restraint. So far as the records show the right to present was alienated by the canons on only three occasions, two immediately prior to the dissolution, and never to members of the magnate class. In 1539 George Jackson was instituted to the vicarage of Bolam on the presentation of Matthew Whytfeld, gentlemen, by reason of an earlier grant of the right of next presentation from the abbot and canons of Blanchland.[1] Four years earlier, in 1535, the abbot and convent of Alnwick had granted the right to make the next presentation to the vicarage of Lesbury to George Clarkson, Robert Henryson and George Wilkynson or Lesburye, the last of whom was himself a canon of Alnwick who had held the vicarage of Alnham from 1534 to 1538.[2] In the event, they transferred their privilege to Christopher Adthe, who presented the next vicar in 1556.[3] The third /

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[1] R.T. f. 27v.
[2] Ibid. f. 32v.
[3] Ibid. f. 47v; Hodgson-Hinde, op.cit., i, p. 161.

third alienation of the canons' right to present occurred in 1456, when the abbey of Alnwick granted the right of next presentation to the vicarage of Chatton to William Robinson and George Champney, burgesses of Newcastle, who presented Henry Castle.[1]

If the canons lost none of the advantages of their advowsons through the interference of the laity, however, the abbey of Alnwick was prevented from exercising its rights of presentation to the vicarage of Wooler, and probably also to that of Chillingham, by the bishop of Durham, who reserved to himself the gift of the vicarage when he appropriated Wooler to the abbey in 1313.[2] As is remarked in the Northumberland County History, the appropriation and the episcopal assumption of the advowson of the vicarage ended a fifty-year dispute over the possession of the church between the canons of Alnwick and the family of Huntercumbe, and the disturbance caused by this protracted quarrel probably reinforced the more general argument of the depressed state of the abbey during the border wars as a reason for Bishop Kellaw's retention of the advowson in his own hands.[3] The bishop's care for the interests of the incumbent vicars and for the cure of souls is further attested by the provision of housing and stipends for the vicar and a chaplain in the deed of appropriation. The vicar's stipend was to be 16 marks a year from which he had to pay the chaplain;[4] but by 1535 the /

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[1] N.C.H. xiv, p. 194.
[2] N.C.H. xi, p. 289; R.P.D. i, p. 443-450.
[3] N.C.H. loc.cit.; R.P.D. loc.cit.; cf. above pp. 189-190.
[4] R.P.D. i, p. 447.

the monetary value of this stipend had fallen to £5:8:0.[1] The case of Chillingham is not so clear; for, while we know that the church was given to Alnwick by William de Vesci before 1184, we have only a confirmation of the original appropriation by Bishop Richard Marsh (1217-26).[2] Thus it is not absolutely clear whether the bishop himself presented to the vicarage during our period or before it.[3] Nevertheless, the collations to the vicarage between 1362 and 1434[4] make it fairly clear that the bishop was in fact the patron; while at the beginning of Bishop Tunstall's episcopate - about 1530 - the vicarage was included in a list of the bishop's advowsons.[5] The large proportion of the revenues of the church which were reserved for the vicar in 1291 also suggest a strong episcopal interest in the vicarage;[6] and the probability of episcopal presentation is increased by the fact that none of the incumbents was a canon of Alnwick.

This last point leads us to the most important idiosyncracy of Alnwick and Blanchland as appropriating houses. For in the case of their eight remaining churches to which the bishop clearly did /

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1 Valor Eccl.

2 N.C.H. xiv, p. 307.

3 For this reason, the vicarage of Chillingham has not been included among the benefices in the bishop's gift which have been dealt with on pp. 189-191.

4 See below, vol. 2.

5 See below, vol. 2; R.T. fol. a.v.

6 In the Taxation of Pope Nicholas the rectory was valued at £13:6:8, the vicarage at £6:13:4. By 1535 the valuation of the vicarage had fallen to £4:0:0. (Valor Eccl.)

did not present the incumbent, the abbeys received from the bishop, at the time of appropriation of the rectory, or sometimes later, the right to serve the cure of souls attached to the vicarages not by secular clerks but by canons regular of the monastery.[1] All four of Blanchland's churches and four out of Alnwick's six were served by canon-vicars during most of our period.

Neither of the Northumberland abbeys seems ever to have proceeded to take the further step of appropriating the vicarages themselves as was done by several of the southern Premonstratensian houses towards the end of the 14th century. If a monastery appropriated a vicarage it meant, in effect, that the cure was served by a stipendiary lay priest - or, if it were a house of canons, by a member of the chapter - appointed and removed at will, without episcopal institution; and also paid "at will" by the monastery.[2] The canons who held the vicarages in the gift of Alnwick and Blanchland were in the same position as secular perpetual vicars, and received the full revenues of the vicarages.

Be this as it may, the placing of canons in charge of vicarages, whether appropriated or not, while it increased the monastery's hold /

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[1] E.g. N.C.H. ii, pp. 439-40; v, pp. 432-3; xiv, p. 560.

[2] Such appropriations of vicarages are considered by H. M. Colvin in The White Canons in England, Oxford, 1951, pp. 282-283. Popular dissatisfaction with the inadequacy of the stipendiary curates produced the 1402 statute which annulled all appropriations of vicarages since the first year of the reign of Richard II - a measure which did not, however, eliminate such appropriations for the future. (Ibid., quoting Statutes of the Realm, ii, 136.)

hold over its churches and frequently increased the revenues which it obtained from them, had the effect of denying it the advantages and influence which would otherwise have accrued to it as a dispenser of patronage. The monastery could not provide a secular clerk with a benefice reserved for one of its own canons. Thus, for all practical purposes, Alnwick and Blanchland Abbeys simply do not count among the possible patrons of the secular clergy in the diocese.

In the case of Blanchland this was no very great loss, for the total value of the three vicarages in its gift in 1291 was only £17:15:8; in 1359 the rectory of Bolam was appropriated and in 1535 the total valuation of the four vicarages was £17:18:9. Alnwick's vicarages, exclusive of Wooler, had a total value of £68:6:8 (or £75:0:0 including Chillingham[1]) in 1291, but had dropped to £29:0:6½ (or £33:0:6½ including Chillingham) in 1535. The large figure for 1291 is mainly due to the inclusion of the wealthy vicarage of Chatton, which, valued at £50 in the Taxation of Pope Nicholas, had fallen to £12:16:0½ (still a considerable figure for a vicarage) in 1535. Chatton was a very large parish in the valley of the River Till, and its size seems to have maintained its revenues at a higher figure than those of Alnwick's other churches in spite of the wastage resulting from the wars.[2]

It was not until after the dissolution of the monasteries, however /

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[1] See above, p. 218.

[2] N.C.H. xiv, p. 192.

however, that any of these revenues came into the hands of the secular clergy through their appointment to the vicarages. After the monasteries of Alnwick and Blanchland had ceased to exist, the advowsons of their vicarages passed into lay hands with two exceptions: those of Chillingham and Wooler, which remained with the bishop of Durham, who as we have seen, certainly held the advowson of Wooler and probably that of Chillingham throughout our period. The advowsons of Alnham, Lesbury, Shilbottle and Bolam remained vested in the crown, while those of Bywell St. Andrew, Heddon and Kirkharle went to local landowners. Only the vicarage of Chatton - significantly enough the wealthiest - passed to a local magnate: the earl of Northumberland, although he did not receive it until 1560.[1]

(v) The Augustinian priory of Brinkburn and cell of Bamborough.

The priory of Brinkburn and Bamborough, a cell of the Yorkshire priory of Nostell, both in Northumberland, were the only two houses of the Order of Augustinian Canons in the diocese of Durham. They had the appropriation of only three parish churches, as opposed to the ten held by the two Northumberland houses of Premonstratensian canons, and their influence was therefore considerably less than that of the latter order. Indeed, so far as it depended on the exercise of patronage in appointing secular clerks to their churches it /

[1] The disposals of the advowsons in the 16th century are dealt with in N.C.H. and Hodgson in the sections on these parishes which have already been referred to.

it was precisely nil. For this reason, it is perhaps unnecessary to do more here than indicate very briefly the nature of the churches appropriated to Brinkburn and Bamborough, since the concern of this chapter is with patronage rather than appropriation in itself.

Before 1260 the church of Felton, which had been gifted to Brinkburn by William Bertram in the last years of the 12th century,[1] was appropriated to the monastery;[2] and in 1313 the canons received from Bishop Kellawe the privilege of serving the vicarage by members of their community - a privilege which they exercised up to the dissolution.[3] It was not until 1386 that the rectory of Longhorsley was given to Brinkburn by Ralph, Lord Graystock; it was appropriated five years later and thereafter canons of Brinkburn occupied the vicarage.[4] To offset the loss of the influence of patronage, they avoided paying to clerks who were not members of their own communities £11:6:8 a year by the end of our period, £3:13:4 of which represented the valuation of the vicarage of Felton and £7:13:4 that of the vicarage of Longhorsley in the Valor Ecclesiasticus.[5] That is to say, the vicarages themselves were not /

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1 N.C.H. vii, p. 268.

2 Ibid., p. 269.

3 R.P.D. i, pp. 335-7; 489.

4 Hodgson, op.cit., II, ii, pp. 89-90. The parishes of Felton and Longhorsley were adjacent, both of moderate size, and they lay immediately to the south of Alnwick's parishes of Alnwick and Shilbottle.

5 Cf. the similar arrangements of the Premonstratensian houses of Alnwick and Blanchland. (See above, pp. 218-219.) There is, unfortunately /

not appropriated and the canon-vicars were presented, instituted and inducted in the same manner as secular clerks.

This was not true in the case of the church of Bamborough, which had been granted to the Yorkshire priory of Nostell by King Henry I, although the canons did not obtain settled possession of the advowson until 1228.[1] Thereafter the parish church was served by canons of the cell of Nostell which was established in Bamborough under a master, who seems to have been responsible for the cure of souls, although in 1501 there is a reference to a "perpetual curate", and this curacy continued to function after the dissolution.[2] Thus for most of our period Bamborough, like Felton and Longhorsley, provided no benefice for a secular clerk. Strictly speaking, indeed, it ranks rather with those monastic churches such as Monkwearmouth and Jarrow which served as parish churches but in which all the duties were performed by members of the monastic community. It has been included in this survey partly because secular clerks were being appointed as perpetual curates at the end of our period and /

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unfortunately no work on the Augustinian Order in England which equals in scope Mr. Colvin's monograph on the Premonstratensians; but the most recent study - The origins of the Austin Canons and their introduction into England. By J. C. Dickinson. Lond., 1950 - while concentrating on the early history of the order, makes it clear that the Augustinians were early authorised to undertake parochial work and suggests that they did not make much use of this authorisation in England in the early middle ages, but that after the 14th century periods of plague, the number of canons serving their vicarages increased. (pp. 221, 224-7, 240-41.)

1 N.C.H. i, pp. 74-82.

2 Cf. list of incumbents. (Ibid., pp. 94-95.)

and partly because of its great value, deriving largely, no doubt, from its size, the existence within the parish of an important royal castle and a flourishing township, and a good position in the coastal lowlands. In 1291, the rectory was valued at £230:9:4 and in 1545 the house and the site of the cell were sold to Sir John Forster of Adderstone for £664:5:10.[1]

The Forsters were among the many families who held small parcels of land in the parish of Bamborough under the crown; others included Colvilles, Swinhoes, Carrs, Luchers, Couplands, Bradfords, Middletons and Muschamps. The most powerful lay force in the district, however, was in the hands of the holder of Bamborough Castle - that is to say, the crown, and its constables, who were during the later middle ages members of the families of Vescy, Horsley, Horncliff, Neville, Pembrigg, Percy, Coppyll, Gray, Elmsden, Tunstal and Ogle.[2]

In neither of Brinkburn's two parishes was there such a powerful lay stronghold. The manor of Felton passed from the family of Athol to the Lisles in the early 15th century and was retained by them until the 17th century, although the family estates were forfeited to the crown from 1529 to 1536.[3] In the parish of Longhorsley during our period the chief families were the Graystocks, who presented the advowson of the church to the canons of Brinkburn /

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1 Ibid., pp. 93-94.
2 Ibid., pp. 36-49.
3 Ibid., vii, pp. 243-262.

Brinkburn, and the Somervilles; the manor had been partitioned between them on the failure of the male line of the Merlay family in the 13th century.[1] None of these families, however, succeeded in acquiring the advowsons of the parish churches after the dissolution of the monastery of Brinkburn. The vicarage of Felton remained in the gift of the crown, while that of Longhorsley went to the Percies who were the impropriators of the monastery itself.[2] The advowson of Bamborough also remained vested in the crown after the Reformation.[3]

Before closing this brief review of the advowsons in the gift of the Augustinian canons, it is important to note one point about their method of serving the cures of souls by canon-vicars; a point which also applies to the methods of the two Premonstratensian houses in the diocese of Durham. At no time do the surviving records reveal any case of a vicarage being served by more than one resident canon. Colvin suggests that at any rate in the 13th century most English Premonstratensian houses obeyed the precept of the Lateran Council of 1179 that no member of a religious order might serve a parish church without the company of at least one of his brethren;[4] while Dickinson points out that the Augustinians in the 12th and 13th centuries at least attempted to carry it out, although /

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1 Hodgson, op.cit., II, ii, p. 94.
2 N.C.H., vii, p. 284; Hodgson, op.cit., II, ii, pp. 90-92.
3 N.C.H. i, p. 94.
4 Colvin, op.cit., p. 278; quoting J. D. Mansi, Sacrorum conciliorum collectio, xxiv, p. 224 (sic, rectius col. 224).

although the smallness of some of the houses made it impossible for them to provide more than one canon and possibly a lay brother for each vicarage.[1] Although it is probable that for the larger houses at any rate the rule that no canon should serve a vicarage alone "presented no serious difficulties in the 13th century when monastic numbers were high",[2] the smaller monasteries must have found it almost or completely impossible to obey it even then. Certainly it was observed less and less frequently as the 14th century advanced, bringing its ravages of plague and, in the north, of war; by the 15th century, Mr. Colvin notes, there is no reference to the practice among the Premonstratensian canons.[3] Immediately before the dissolution in the diocese of Durham there were 17 canons at Alnwick, 9 at Blanchland and 10 at Brinkburn.[4] Thus, had each of the monasteries served its vicarages with two of its canons, the complements of Alnwick and Brinkburn would have been nearly halved, while Blanchland would have been left with only one canon in the monastery. In such circumstances, it is perhaps permissible to argue from the lack of documentary evidence to the contrary that during our period the canon-vicars in the diocese usually resided alone in their vicarages.

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1 Dickinson, op.cit., pp. 235-6.

2 Colvin, loc.cit.

3 Ibid., p. 279.

4 Hay, Dissolution of the monasteries in the diocese of Durham (A.A. Ser. 4, xv, 1938) p. 72.

(vi) The college of Staindrop.

There is little that need be said of the college of Staindrop as a patron: the only benefice to which it presented was the vicarage attached to the collegiate church itself, which was valued in 1535 at £13:6:8. Until the year 1412 the large parish of Staindrop in the far south of county Durham between the Upper Wear and the Tees was served by a rectory which was in the gift of the bishop of Durham. In 1291 the valuation of this rectory was £93:6:8, but it had fallen to £60:10:4 by 1318;[1] at the end of our period the total value of the collegiate church which had replaced the rectory in 1412, four years after its foundation and endowment by Ralph Neville, first earl of Westmorland, was given as £170:4:6, of which all but £2:17:10 was distributed in pensions to the lay inmates of Staindrop Hospital,[2] to chaplains, to the master of the college (£13:6:8) and to the vicar (£13:6:8).[3]

The chief source of temporal power in the parish of Staindrop presents no difficulty, for within it - within a mile, indeed, of the parish church itself - stood the castle of Raby, the seat of the great house of Neville, the influence of which was preeminent in the south of Durham. No member of the family, however, seems ever to have presented either to the rectory or vicarage of Staindrop, although /

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1 See below, vol. 2.

2 The hospital, which was in fact part of the collegiate church, was administered by the master and chaplains and formed a place of retreat for the aged and disabled members of the earl of Westmorland's military retinue and household staff. (See above, p. 108; and cf. Surtees, op.cit., iv, p. 135.)

3 Valor Ecclesiasticus.

although the occurrence of Thomas Neville as master of the college in 1480[1] suggests the possibility that the influence of the family was brought to bear on his appointment; while in 1432/3 John Norman was presented to the mastership on the nomination of the countess of Westmorland.[2] After 1412 the mastership of the college was in the gift of the bishop, as were the headships of the other collegiate churches in the diocese; while the vicar, who bore responsibility for the cure of souls of the parish, was appointed by the master and chaplains of the college.[3] According to Bishop Langley's ordination, the master and chaplains might present to the vicarage "a clerk, being either one of their own number, or some other fit person being in priest's orders;"[4] but there is no positive evidence of a member of the college having been presented.

When the college was dissolved in 1547, all its possessions were surrendered to the crown, which reserved only "a slender stipend" for an officiating minister for the parish. It was not until 1635 that the perpetual vicarage was re-established on the endowment of Sir Henry Vane.[5]

(vii) The hospitals of Gretham and Sherburn.

The history of the advowsons held by these two hospitals[6] - the /

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1 F.D.
2 R.L. f. 201.
3 R.T. f. 25v.
4 Surtees op.cit., iv, p. 136.
5 Ibid., p. 137.
6 The nature of the hospitals in county Durham is explained above, pp. /

the one situated at the mouth of the Tees, the other just outside the city of Durham - is very straightforward.

Until 1264, when they were forfeited after the capture of Peter de Montfort at the Battle of Evesham, the Montfort family had presented the rectors of Gretham parish. Situated as it was within the palatinate, the forfeited manor, together with the advowson, passed to the bishop of Durham, who endowed the hospital of Gretham within the parish in 1272 and shortly afterwards appropriated to it the rectory, the vicarage to be in the gift of the master and brethren of the hospital.[1] Sherburn hospital acquired its three appropriated churches and the gift of their vicarages even earlier, probably in the 12th century and thus very shortly after the foundation of the hospital by Bishop Pudsey in or about 1181.[2] The advowsons of Bishopton and Grindon, two small parishes which lay to the south of the bishop's parish of Sedgefield in the archdeaconry of Darlington, and that of Sockburn, a very small parish[3] on the "peninsula" formed by a southward loop of the River Tees, all passed directly from the local landowners to the hospital. Bishopton /

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pp. 114-116. Neither Gretham nor Sherburn - nor, for that matter the hospital of St. Giles, Kepier, which served the parish churches in its gift by stipendiary curates - were attached to collegiate churches, as was Staindrop Hospital.

1 Surtees, op.cit., pp. 136, 140.

2 V.C.H. Durham, ii, p. 115.

3 In speaking of the size of these parishes, however, it must be stressed that their "smallness" would be less noticeable in any diocese which did not include the enormous moorland and hill parishes of the sparsely populated north of England. In fact few of the other parishes in the comparatively thickly populated south east corner of the diocese of Durham were any larger than those under discussion.

Bishopton and Sockburn had both been in the gift of the Conyers family, lords of the manor of Sockburn, and the Conyers remained the most important family in the two parishes during our period. Grindon, prior to its appropriation, was in the gift of the Fulthorps, lords of the manor of Fulthorp, who also held Tunstall in the parish of Stranton, which became their seat in the late 14th century. The manor of Wynyard, also in Grindon parish, was held by the Langton family (originally burgesses of Newcastle) until the 1430s, when it passed to the Conyers from whom it fell to the Claxtons in the 16th century.[1]

There seems to have been only one occasion on which any member of these families interfered in the presentations to the vicarages in the later middle ages. Unfortunately the records do not make clear exactly what happened: a document dated 1425[2] records the presentation of John de Burdon of the diocese of York to the vicarage of Sockburn by one John - presumably John Conyers; but the record of the collation in Langley's Register[3] states that the presentation was made in regular form by Sherburn Hospital. Perhaps the likeliest explanation is that John Conyers suggested John de Burdon to the warden as a possible vicar and the hospital accepted the nomination. Apart from this occasion, Gretham and Sherburn appear to have exercised undisturbed their rights of presentation up /

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[1] Surtees, op.cit., iii, pp. 67-69, 75-80, 243, 251.
[2] M.C. 6887x.
[3] R.L. f. 124.

up to and beyond the Reformation; for the two hospitals were not dissolved and all four advowsons remained in their hands.[1]

In character the four parishes differed little from each other. Situated as they were in the most thickly populated part of the bishopric, all in the deanery of Darlington, their peasants were less likely than those in any other part of the diocese to suffer from the wars, although perhaps more likely to feel the effects of the plagues.[2] Agriculture was, of course, the chief occupation, although the salt-pans around Gretham, which were not finally washed away by the tides until the 16th or 17th century, were the foundations of a small industry and trade in salt, from which Gretham Hospital derived a profit in the shape of a salt tithe from several of the farms in the neighbourhood.[3] This activity may be reflected in the comparatively large value of £7:1:8 which was placed upon the vicarage of Gretham in the Valor Ecclesiasticus, and which compares very favourably with the contemporaneous valuation of the three vicarages in the gift of Sherburn Hospital (Bishopton £4:5:8; Grindon £4:11:4; Sockburn £3:18:0). Thus Gretham Hospital probably had an advantage over Sherburn in the patronage at its disposal; for while in the aggregate that of Sherburn was worth more, the warden and brethren of Gretham had the most valuable single benefice to offer, and it was, so to speak, on their /

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1 Surtees, loc.cit.
2 See above, pp. 43-45.
3 V.C.H. Durham, ii, 294.

their doorstep.

The conditions of patronage in the parishes which were in the gift of the "native" clergy and religious houses of the diocese of Durham have been considered in some detail in order to indicate fully the factors which might influence the exercise of patronage and determine the nature of the parish clergy. Briefly these factors were (i) the identity of the patron, (ii) the means by which the patronage was acquired, (iii) the geographical position, extent, resources (natural and industrial) of the benefices, (iv) their value, (v) the principal lay families of the areas in which the parishes were situated, and (vi) - as a corollary to v - what became of the patronage immediately after the Reformation. Although a detailed examination of the clerks who were appointed by these patrons must needs be postponed until the next chapter, it is perhaps permissible from the above description of the patronage to hazard the suggestion that the most important of the six conditions were numbers i, iii and iv. For the occasions on which the local gentry or magnates directly interfered with presentations in ecclesiastical gift were few in the extreme.

In the palatinate the bishop, in addition to being by far the most important patron, was also incontestably the most powerful magnate; even the Nevilles were tenants of the bishop for their lands north of the Tees. Although the 15th century saw a considerable decline in the practical power of the bishop, and his legal authority as lord palatine largely dissolved under the impact of /

of Henry VIII's "Gleichschaltung" of the palatinates, it was impossible for any temporal lord to inherit the unique position which he had held in the scheme of ecclesiastical patronage as a result of his peculiar combination of feudal, military, political and ecclesiastical authority.

In Northumberland, although families such as the Percies, Ogles, Umfravilles and Dacres were in a stronger position than those in the palatinate, they did not force their clerks into the benefices of the church's patronage. Not only this, but the lack of any conspicuous effort by the most important families to acquire advowsons at the dissolution of the monasteries suggests that their interest in these local benefices as sources of patronage was not great.

Thus it may be said that the patronage in the hands of the church was exercised by the church; in the main the choice of parish clergy in the 75 benefices which we have been considering was in the hands of their direct ecclesiastical patrons, and the availability of the protégés of such patrons would depend upon the location, value and local conditions of their benefices.

The patrons of the other 25 Durham benefices in ecclesiastical gift were all-except for the bishop of Carlisle - monastic houses which were situated outside of the diocese of Durham.[1] The churches which /

[1] A list of these patrons, together with the number of benefices in their gift, will be found on pp. 173 , above.

Table 3

Diocese of Durham

Benefices in the gift of extra-diocesan patrons, c.1500.

Benefice Vicarage unless otherwise stated	Rural Deanery	Patron Dates of appropriation or alienation added if between 1311 and 1540	Valuation in 1535	Most important families - usually lords of the manor	Disposal of advowson immediately after the dissolution of the monasteries
Newburn	Morpeth	Bishop of Carlisle	£16: 0:0	Percy	to Bishop of Carlisle
St.Nicholas, Newcastle	Newcastle	Bishop of Carlisle	£50: 0:0	Newcastle merchants	to Bishop of Carlisle
Rothbury (Rectory)	Alnwick	Bishop of Carlisle	£58: 6:8	Percy	to Bishop of Carlisle
Warkworth	Alnwick	Bishop of Carlisle	£18: 5:8½	Percy	to Bishop of Carlisle
Corbridge	Corbridge	Priory of Carlisle	£11:11:8	Percy	from the Crown to various families
Whittingham	Alnwick	Priory of Carlisle, approp. 1313	£12:11:4	Heron	to Dean and Chapte of Carlisle
Seaham	Durham	Abbey of Coverham, approp. 1475	£5: 0:4	Hadham	to the Crown
Castle Eden (Chapelry)	Durham	Priory of Guisborough	-	manor to Priory of Guisborough	to the Crown and later went with the manor
Hart	Durham	Priory of Guisborough	£11:17:0	Clifford	to the Crown

Stranton	Durham	Priory of Guisborough, approp. before 1312	£17:16:0	Clifford; manor sub-infeudated to Lumley	to Dodsworth of Yorkshire
Alston	Corbridge	Priory of Hexham, approp. c.1376	£7:13:0	Hilton; Clifford	from the Crown to various families
Chollerton	Corbridge	Priory of Hexham	£6:14:4	Swinburne	from the Crown to Fenwick
Ovingham	Corbridge	Priory of Hexham, alien. and approp. 1378	£5: 8:4	Percy	from the Crown to Codenham
Stamfordham	Corbridge	Priory of Hexham	£14:18:0	Swinburne	to the Crown
Warden	Corbridge	Priory of Hexham	£7:16:2	Tyndale	to the Crown
Ilderton	Bamborough	Priory of Kirkham	£4: 0:0	Roos; manor sub-infeudated to Ilderton	to Lords of Ilderton
Kirknewton	Bamborough	Priory of Kirkham	£3: 6:8	Strother	from Crown to Strother
Upper Denton (Rectory)	Corbridge	Priory of Lanercost	£4: 5:5	-	from Crown in 1562 to Pickerell; to Twydell by 1566
Longbenton	Newcastle	Balliol College, Oxford; alien. and approp. 1339/40	£3: 1:4	Thornton; Killingworth	to Balliol College
Embleton	Alnwick	Merton College, Oxford	£11: 3:4	Crown acquired the manor on the accession of the House of Lancaster in 1399	to Merton College

Ponteland	Morpeth	Merton College, Oxford	£13: 6:8	Manor to Merton College from Athol family	to Merton College
Eglingham	Alnwick	Abbey of St. Albans; the right of presentation may have passed to the Bishop of Durham in the 15th century	£23: 3:1½	Ogle	to Bishop of Durham
Gainford	Darlington	Abbey of St. Mary, York	£39:16:0	Neville	from the Crown to Trinity College, Cambridge
Middleton in Teesdale (Rectory)	Darlington	Abbey of St. Mary, York	£26: 0:0	-	-
Stainton (Rectory)	Darlington	Abbey of St. Mary, York	£12:13:4	Lambton	to the Crown

which were in their gift immediately before the dissolution are set out together with their locations, values, patrons, lay neighbours and disposal after the dissolution in table 3 which is inserted between pages 233 and 234.

Naturally, having regard to the number of benefices in Durham which were in the gift of the bishop and the prior and convent of Durham, most of the advowsons of extra-diocesan patrons were attached to parishes in Northumberland. Only seven out of the twenty-five were in county Durham, although, as might be expected, they provided some of the most valuable patronage. The vicarage of Gainford and the rectories of Middleton-in-Teesdale and Stainton, at a total value of £78:6:4 in 1535, made their patron, the Benedictine monastery of St. Mary in the city of York, second only to the bishop of Carlisle as an extra-diocesan dispenser of patronage. The original patron of the abbey of St. Mary itself was the family of Baliol who alienated the advowsons in the 12th century. During our period, however, the most important families of Teesdale were the Beauchamps and the Nevilles (in 1488 the barony of Gainford passed from the Beauchamps by marriage to the Nevilles[1]); while the chief family in Stainton was that of Lambton.[2] None of these families acquired any of the advowsons on the dissolution of the monastery; they passed immediately to the crown and that of Gainford was eventually conveyed to Trinity College, Cambridge.[3] Nor did /

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1 Surtees, op.cit., iv, p. 8.
2 Ibid., iii, p. 61.
3 Ibid., iv, p. 11.

did the families present to any of the three benefices during our period, although in 1433 the earl of Warwick (Richard de Beauchamp) successfully recommended Stephen Wilberfos to the abbot of St. Mary for presentation to the rectory of Middleton-in-Teesdale,[1] while in 1486 King Henry VII made a similar successful recommendation on behalf of Thomas Castel.[2] On the basis of these two incidents, however, it is hardly possible to build up any case to support a charge of undue lay interference with the presentation rights of the monastery.

To an extent greater than their Durham counterparts, the extra-diocesan ecclesiastical patrons seem, by chance or by design, to have collected most of their benefices in the same geographical area, and frequently in little clusters of contiguous parishes. This was true of the Yorkshire Augustinian priory of Guisborough's three churches of Hart, Stranton and Castle Eden. Hart and Stranton on the east coast of the palatinate immediately to the north of Gretham were separated from the tiny parish of Castle Eden only by that of Hesleden. Both Hart and Stranton had been appropriated by the early 14th century, but the canons probably did not consider it worth while to appropriate Castle Eden, which was only a chapelry, and although not listed in Valor Ecclesiasticus, was probably very poor. The 1535 value of the advowsons of Hart and Stranton vicarages, however - £29:13:0 - was considerable, and although these parishes /

[1] R.L. ff. 202v-203; 301.
[2] F.D.

parishes were situated in the territory of the powerful family of Clifford,[1] the canons exercised their rights as patrons without interference.[2] Only at the very end of their existence as a community did they alienate their right of presentation and then for one turn only and to one benefice only - Hart - and to a clergyman, Anthony Bellysis, LL.D.[3] After the dissolution, the advowson of the vicarage of Hart remained with the Crown, while that of Stranton passed to the Yorkshire family of Dodsworth; the presentation to Castle Eden chapelry was attached to the manor of Eden.[4]

The most impressive of the "clusters" of parishes in the hands of one patron, however, were those of the Augustinian priory of Hexham. Contiguous with the liberty of Hexham itself, which, although geographically in Northumberland came under the jurisdiction of the archbishop of York, were its five parishes of (reading clockwise) Alston, Warden, Chollerton, Stamfordham and Ovingham.[5] These were all large parishes, having - with the exception of Alston - comparatively wealthy churches,[6] and in 1535 the valuations of the vicarages ranged from the £14:18:0 of Stamfordham to the £5:8:4 of Ovingham /

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1 Surtees, op.cit., iii, pp. 95, 121.

2 Only Hart was served by canons from Guisborough; secular clergy were appointed to Stranton. (See below, vol. 2.)

3 R.T. f. 25v.

4 Surtees, op.cit., iii, p. 96; 125; i, p. 45.

5 See map 1. Alston parish, although within the archdeaconry of Northumberland, fell within the boundary of the county of Cumberland.

6 The rectory of Alston was valued at only £8 in 1291.

Ovingham. The total value of the priory of Hexham's patronage in the vicarages was £42:9:10, which represented a sharp decline from the position in 1291, when, with Ovingham still in the gift of the lords of Prudhoe, but with Alston and Stamfordham not yet appropriated, the value of the patronage at the priory's disposal totalled £112:10:6. Ovingham rectory was appropriated in 1378, immediately after its alienation by Gilbert de Umfraville III and Henry Percy, earl of Northumberland.[1] It seems that a cell of Hexham was established at Ovingham, served by a master and three canons,[2] and it is probable that one of them served the vicarage, although the records of appointments to the vicarage - which was always held by canons of Hexham - make no reference to the cell. Ovingham was thus the only parish in the diocese in which the canon incumbent was clearly accompanied by brother canons.[3]

The most important local families and the distribution of Hexham's advowsons are indicated in table 3. The lands of these parishes did not form the estates of any one family, and, as usual in the diocese, the lords of the manors did not acquire the advowsons at the dissolution; from the crown they were granted - if at all - to members of less important families.

Among the advowsons held by extra-diocesan religious houses, it /

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1 N.C.H. xii, p. 53.

2 Ibid.; Knowles and Hadcock, Medieval religious houses; England and Wales, p. 149.

3 The priory of Guisborough was supposed to appoint two canons to the parish of Hart, but it seems that one was to serve the chapel of Hartlepool. (Surtees, op.cit., iii, pp. 95-96.) For a discussion of the non-observance of the rule that Augustinian and Premonstratensian /

it appears that only two did in fact pass between the years 1536 and 1540 to the family which was chief landholder in the parish. These were the advowsons of the vicarages of Ilderton and Kirknewton, both of which churches had been appropriated by the early 14th century to the Augustinian priory of Kirkham in Yorkshire. They were contiguous parishes in the far north-west of Northumberland and evidently suffered considerably from the border wars; the monetary value of the vicarage of Ilderton dropped from £10 in 1291 to £4 in 1535; while that of Kirknewton - a much larger parish - fell from £20 to £3:6:8 over the same period. Incidentally Ilderton provides an instance - very rare in Durham diocese - in which the value of the vicarage in 1291 was exactly half that of the rectory (£20)[1]; Kirknewton was more conventional, since the rectory was valued at £90 in 1291, the vicarage thus rating two ninths of its value. Both parish churches were included by Walter Espec in his original endowment of Kirkham priory.[2] During our period the lands of Ilderton and Roseden, parts of the barony of Wark, were subinfeudated to the family of Ilderton, to whom the advowson of the vicarage had fallen by 1575; while in 1553, the Strothers, the chief landowners in the parish of Kirknewton, likewise acquired the advowson of this vicarage.[3]

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Premonstratensian canons should only serve parish cures if one or more members of their monastery accompanied them to their parish, see above, pp. 225-226.

1 Cf. above, pp. 203-204.

2 Founded c.1122. (Knowles and Hadcock, op.cit., p. 142.)

3 N.C.H. xiv, pp. 256, 258, 267; xi, pp. 117-119, 144.

The bishop of Carlisle, the only ecclesiastical magnate besides the bishop of Durham who held advowsons in the diocese, was the most important of the extra-diocesan clerical patrons; in 1535 his four advowsons of Newburn, St. Nicholas, Newcastle, Warkworth (vicarages) and Rothbury (rectory)[1] were together valued at £142:12:4½. Unlike the Yorkshire Augustinian houses,[2] the bishop and the Augustinian chapter of Carlisle did not succeed in obtaining all their benefices in the same area. The parishes of Newcastle and Newburn lay alongside each other on the north bank of the Tyne, while Rothbury and Warkworth in the deanery of Alnwick were separated by the large parish of Felton. The prior and convent's appropriated church of Corbridge on the Tyne was far removed from their other parish of Whittingham which had a common boundary with that of Rothbury.

It is convenient to deal with the bishop of Carlisle's patronage along with that of his Augustinian chapter for two reasons: first, two at least of their churches passed from the chapter's to the bishop's gift in the early middle ages, and secondly the treatment of their respective churches by bishop and chapter admirably reveals how an individual's approach to patronage differed from that of a corporation. The rectories of both Newburn and Newcastle were /

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[1] Rothbury is valued in the Valor Ecclesiasticus as a vicarage, but this seems to be an error, for while the bishop of Carlisle appropriated the tithes he never appropriated the rectory itself. (N.C.H. xv, p. 309.)

[2] Including Hexham, since the liberty of Hexham was a "peculiar" of the archbishopric of York.

were in the original endowment of the bishopric in 1123 and about 1194 were appropriated to the bishop,[1] and that of Corbridge, granted to the prior and convent in 1107, was appropriated by the canons in 1193/4.[2] Rothbury, originally granted to the priory of Carlisle in 1122, had passed into the hands of the bishop by the 13th century;[3] while Warkworth was granted by King Henry I to the canons and appropriated to the priory, although the advowson of the vicarage was acquired by the bishop.[4] Whittingham rectory, granted to the "church" of Carlisle in 1122, eventually came into the hands of the convent and was appropriated by them in 1313, the advowson of the vicarage remaining in their hands.[5] Thus, out of these six churches, two of which had originally been granted to the bishop, one to the church of Carlisle generally and three to the prior and convent, the bishop had by the beginning of our period acquired the right of presentation to three of the vicarages and to the only unappropriated rectory.

In order to appreciate how the bishop's approach to his churches differed from the canons' to theirs, it will be useful to have the 1291 and 1535 valuations before us:-

Table /

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1 N.C.H. xiii, p. 119.
2 Ibid., x, pp. 179-80.
3 Ibid., xv, p. 309.
4 Ibid., v, p. 170.
5 Ibid., xiv, pp. 483-4.

Table 4

Incumbents presented by the bishop.

Newburn	1291:	rectory £62; vicarage £11:1:2
	1535:	vicarage £16
Newcastle	1291:	rectory, with portions of priories of Carlisle and Tynemouth £85:6:8; vicarage £20:5:0
	1535:	vicarage £50
Rothbury	1291:	rectory £133:6:8
	1535:	vicarage (*rectius* rectory?) £58:6:8
Warkworth	1291:	rectory £80; vicarage £20
	1535:	vicarage £18:5:8½

Incumbents presented by the prior and convent.

Corbridge	1291:	rectory £75; vicarage £9:16:0
	1535:	vicarage £11:11:8
Whittingham	1291:	rectory and portion of priory of Carlisle £90
	1535:	vicarage £12:11:4

The intention of these figures is not so much to show that the bishop claimed the lion's share of the profits, although - given the fact that he got four churches compared with the priory's two - this was no doubt true; but rather to illustrate the distinction between the corporate priory's preference for the direct profits of appropriation and the bishop's for a considerable amount of valuable patronage. The bishop, as ecclesiastical lord, had men of a "familia" of clerks to provide for, and profited more than the canons could from a reputation as a wealthy purveyor of patronage. Thus, while in 1291 the priory and convent was paying to the vicar of /

of Corbridge approximately 13% of the value of the rectory, the vicars of Newburn, Newcastle and Warkworth received from the bishop about 18%, 24% and 25% respectively of the values of these rectories. Moreover, whatever the fluctuations in the valuation of the Newcastle Rectory may have been in the later middle ages, the value of £50 attached to the vicarage in 1535 must have been at least half that of the rectory.

The position with regard to local lay magnates and the disposal of the advowsons at the Reformation is clear.[1] By far the most powerful lay family with which the church of Carlisle had to deal in its Durham parishes was that of Percy, but the Percies do not appear to have interfered with presentations and they did not acquire any of the advowsons in 1540.

So far we have mentioned only the patrons of Yorkshire and Cumberland, which constituted the majority of the extra-diocesan advowson holders; but in the south of England there were three religious houses which held advowsons in the diocese of Durham and which are worth some consideration.

Balliol College, Oxford, received the advowson of Longbenton from Philip de Somerville, to whose family it had descended from the Merlays, in 1339/40, shortly after which the rectory was appropriated.[2] Although the parish was situated immediately to the east of Newcastle, its frontage on the north bank of the River Tyne was very /

[1] See table 3.
[2] N.C.H. xiii, p. 399.

very narrow, which may partly account for the rather small valuation of the rectory in 1291 (£31:6:6) as compared with those of its neighbours, Tynemouth and Newcastle, and the very wealthy episcopal and priory parishes on the opposite bank of the river; in 1535 the vicarage, valued at £3:1:4 did not even reach the 13th century canonical minimum of 5 marks. Thus it seems that the mineral wealth of Tynemouth did not percolate to the clergy of Longbenton. The chief lay power in the area for most of our period was the family of Thornton, to whom the township of Longbenton passed as a part of the barony of Merlay in 1405/6 after it had descended from the original Merlay family to that of Somerville and then to Ap Griffyth in the course of the 13th and 14th centuries.[1] The Thorntons, a family of Newcastle merchants who supplied a mayor of Newcastle in the early 15th century,[2] became important landowners around the lower Tyne during the later middle ages[3] - a local sample of the social historian's "rise of the middle class." They do not seem to have interfered with Balliol College's rights of presentation, and after the Reformation the vicarage remained in the gift of the fellows. Unlike Merton, however, Balliol did not present any of its own fellows to its Northumberland vicarage, which may be a result of its comparatively small value.

Merton College's two appropriated churches in the diocese were Ponteland /

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1 Ibid., pp. 408-411.
2 C.P.R. 1405-8, p. 30.
3 Ibid.

Ponteland, to the north-west of Newcastle, and Embleton on the east coast just south of Bamborough. Although not geographically so well situated as Longbenton, the vicarages of Ponteland and Embleton were valued respectively at £13:6:8 and £11:3:4 in 1535. The first three decades of the 14th century were for Embleton parish a disturbed era in which Merton College fought a legal battle for the advowson with the descendents of Edmund, earl of Lancaster, the original donor of the church to the college.[1] It ended in success for the claims of the fellows, to whom, in 1332, the rectory was appropriated. Thereafter Merton's possession and appropriation of both their Northumberland churches was undisturbed and it remained so even during and after the Reformation. On one occasion only did the patronage pass from the hands of the fellows of Merton, when in 1372, after the papal promotion of the vicar of Embleton, Thomas de Farnilawe, to the chancellorship of York, a papal provision of Richard de Ireland as his successor took precedence over Merton's presentation of John de Bloxham.[2] During the period 1332-1540 at least two of the fourteen vicars of Embleton were fellows of Merton College; while six of the eleven incumbents of Ponteland between 1304 and 1540 were also chosen from within the college. To some extent, of course, this practice diminished what might be termed the general value of the college as a patron; but there is evidence that the interests of members of the college in the vicarages did not /

[1] N.C.H. ii, pp. 49-59.
[2] Ibid., pp. 64-65.

not always outweigh the advantages which resulted from the exercise of patronage "out of school." In 1501, for example, we even find John Baldwin, a member of the other university,[1] installed as vicar of Embleton. Thus the bias of patronage for both Embleton and Ponteland vicarages was towards the universities. Such a bias is not, moreover, apparent in the list of Longbenton's vicars, many of whom seem, from their names, to have been local men, so that the three Northumberland benefices in the gift of the Oxford colleges provide an illustration on a small scale of how the value of a benefice tended to be in inverse proportion to the number of local people among its incumbents.

The third south of England religious house to hold an advowson in the diocese of Durham was the Benedictine abbey of St. Albans. In its own right and as the mother house of the cell and priory of Tynemouth, St. Albans might have expected to exercise complete or partial control over seven advowsons in the diocese. In fact, as we have seen, four of these churches passed to Tynemouth,[2] and of the three which were appropriated to St. Albans, the bishop of Durham had retained the right of presentation to the vicarages of two - Coniscliffe and Hartburn. Thus for most of our period only the vicarage of Eglingham remained in the gift of the abbey. In fact, this church had been granted by one Winnoc the Hunter to the monks at Tynemouth in the early 12th century, and it was to the priory that /

[1] He was a scholar of King's College, Cambridge, in 1452. (F.D.)
[2] See above, pp. 210-212.

that the monks of Durham surrendered their claims to Eglingham in 1174. In some way during the next eighty years, however, Tynemouth's interest in the church must have been transferred by agreement or force to the mother house at St. Albans, for in 1252 Bishop Kirkham issued a confirmation of the church and the advowson of the rectory to the abbey, and by 1291 a vicarage was established.[1]

If the acquisition of the advowson by St. Albans was rather a complicated process because of the claims of Durham and Tynemouth priories, the loss of it by the abbey to the bishop of Durham is frankly mysterious. The records of pre-Reformation vicars come to an end in 1467, so that we have no later presentation, institution or induction documents to help us, and whilst the Northumberland County History suggests that St. Albans presented the vicars right up to the dissolution, when the advowson passed to the bishop of Durham, Eglingham vicarage occurs in the list of benefices in the bishop's gift which is prefixed to Tunstall's register, and which in the opinion of its editor probably belongs to the first year of this episcopate, 1530/31.[2] After the Reformation, however, it is clear that the advowson was in the hands of the bishop.[3]

The parish was situated in the border country in the north of Northumberland and its comparative wealth - the rectory was valued at /

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1 N.C.H. xiv, pp. 361-362; Taxation of Pope Nicholas.

2 R.T. fol. a.v. See also the Surtees Society's edition by Miss Gladys Hinde: The registers of Cuthbert Tunstall and James Pilkington. (S.S. clxi) introd., p. xxiii.

3 N.C.H. xiv, p. 363.

at £74:6:8 in 1291 - was no doubt partly due to its size. This also was probably the reason for the high proportion of that wealth which went to the resident vicar - £26:13:4 is 1291 and £23:3:1½ in 1535 - who was responsible for the appointment and maintenance of chaplains to attend to the cure of souls in the subordinate chapels of Brandon and Brampton. In the 1430s that somewhat unsatisfactory vicar, Robert de Balmburgh (who, in addition to ignoring episcopal orders to reside and do his job properly, added injury to insult by neglecting to pay his obventions) was being pursued by the parishioners of these chapelries through ecclesiastical courts from Durham to the papal curia in Rome in an attempt to compel him to fulfil his obligations in respect of their cure of souls.[1] Indeed it is not inconceivable that this deplorable case of neglect - and possibly others like it - induced an energetic 15th century bishop of Durham to undertake himself the presentation to the vicarage, in order to place himself in a stronger position to ensure that the incumbents fulfilled their obligations.[2]

When the advowson of the vicarage was in the hands of St. Albans abbey, however, we have no reason to believe that there was any interference with their rights of presentation, either from the bishop or from the local lay potentates, the family of Ogle. For the /

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[1] R.L. ff. 189; 224; Loc. x, 16; M.C. 5630; 2613; 2609; 2587; 5163; 5642; Cart. iii, ff. 195-195v.

[2] We have already seen that one reason why the bishop sometimes retained the presentation to vicarages upon appropriation was the desire to ensure proper attention to the cure of souls. (See above, pp. 189-190.)

the 14th and at least part of the 15th century, therefore, we can be sure that St. Albans was in free possession of the most valuable Durham advowson which was in the hands of any religious house in the southern province of the English Church.

One of the most striking facts revealed by this short sketch of non-diocesan ecclesiastical patronage in Durham and the table which accompanies it (table 3) is the large proportion of that patronage which was in the hands of houses of regular canons: fourteen benefices out of twenty-five. Thirteen of these were in the gift of the Augustinian houses of Carlisle, Guisborough, Hexham, Kirkham and Lanercost; while one - Seaham - was acquired in 1475 by the Premonstratensian canons of Coverham. A brief comparison of this patronage and its exercise with that in the hands of the four Northumberland houses of Alnwick, Blanchland, Brinkburn and Bamborough[1] is of some interest.

The "native" canons had in their hands the advowsons of only twelve benefices, or eleven if Chillingham vicarage is regarded as being in the bishop's direct collation, as it probably should be,[2] and of these only three were in the gift of the two Augustinian houses of Brinkburn and Bamborough. Thus, while the Durham Premonstratensians had the lion's share of advowsons; among the parishes of the extra-diocesan canons the single benefice in Coverham's gift was completely swamped by the thirteen in the hands of the /

[1] See above, pp. 212-226.
[2] See above, p. 218.

the five Augustinian houses. But the most radical difference between the two groups of canon-patrons had nothing to do with their orders; it was that while the Durham houses served all their eleven cures of souls[1] by members of their own houses, only six of the fourteen cures in the hands of extra-diocesan canons were served by members of the convents. It requires little imagination to suggest that the main reason for this was geography - the distance of the parishes from the patrons; except, that is, in the case of the canons of Hexham, whose parishes adjoined their "liberty". But even this exception tends to prove the rule, for, after all, Hexham, which was geographically within Northumberland although its lands formed a jurisdictional "peculiar" of the diocese of York, served three out of its five cures with its own canons.

In itself the comparison of the two sets of figures does not lead very far, but it begins to assume a greater significance if we consider also the value of the patronage. The total value of the eleven advowsons of the Durham canons in 1535 was about £68; while that of the other fourteen stood at the considerably higher figure of £116:4:11: that is to say, the average value of benefices in the gift of Durham canons was about £5:13:4, and that of benefices in the gift of extra-diocesan houses was roughly £8:6:0. In the matter of patronage, too, the Yorkshire and Cumberland canons were ahead of the Northumberland convents, because - as we have seen - the serving of all their cures by members of their own communities meant /

[1] Not Chillingham.

meant that the latter had no patronage to dispense to the secular clergy and were thus debarred from using their benefices either as jobs and sources of income for their protégés or as rewards for their benefactors, actual or potential. Of their £116:4:11 annual worth of patronage, on the other hand, the extra-diocesan canons had only £57:11:2 mortgaged to their own brethren, leaving £58:13:9 for distribution elsewhere. Paradoxically, therefore, a secular clergyman of the later middle ages who wanted a benefice of moderate value in the diocese of Durham and whose "connections" were with the orders of regular canons would have to have his petitions directed outside of the diocese to monasteries in Yorkshire and Cumberland.

Part 2. The lay patrons.

In 1291, the year of the valuation for Pope Nicholas's Taxation, 27 out of 119[1] benefices with cure of souls in the diocese of Durham were in lay patronage; by 1311, the technical starting point of this thesis, the figure was 23; in 1350 it was 20, and by 1400, 16; while the alienation of Seaham rectory to the monks of Coverham in 1476 reduced the number to 15, at which it remained until the dissolution of the monasteries. In 1291, about 23% of the advowsons of these benefices were in lay hands, in 1350 about 17%, and from 1476 until 1536 only 13%. Comparisons in terms of monetary value /

[1] 115 by the mid-15th century.

value show an even sharper decline in the amount of patronage which was at the disposal of the laity. In 1291 this patronage was worth £1,140:17:9¾ a year, or roughly 33% of the total value of patronage in the benefices under consideration; nearly two and a half centuries later the equivalent figures were £285:6:5 and 13%.

It is worth giving some consideration to these figures, if only in order that, together with their implications, they will be in our minds when we come to look at the individual patrons. One of the first conclusions that must be drawn is that over this period of 250 years the value of the patronage which remained in the hands of the laity was declining more steeply than that of the advowsons in ecclesiastical gift. While in 1291 the lay families' 23% of the total patronage was equivalent to 33% of its monetary value; by 1535 the two figures were equal, and 13% of the advowsons was worth only 13% of the value of their patronage. Moreover, this relatively greater decline in the value of lay patronage took place in spite of the fact that in 1535 the proportion of appropriated churches was larger than in 1291.

Although these figures represent unmistakably enough the decline in the importance of direct lay presentation during our period, perhaps the most startling illustration of this decline, and, for that matter, of the secondary position of the laity as patrons in relation to the church both in 1291 and in 1535, is a comparison of the total annual value of lay patronage with that of the bishop of Durham alone.[1] The following table may be left to speak /

[1] Cf. above, pp. 192-194.

speak for itself:-

Table 5

Date	Patron	Number of advowsons with cure of souls in his gift	Total value of advowsons in his gift	Percentage of total value of benefices with cure of souls in the diocese of Durham
1291	Bishop of Durham	29	£1,259: 4:0	37%
	Lay patrons	27	£1,140:17:9¾	33%
1535	Bishop of Durham	34	£1,218: 1:6	54%
	Lay patrons	15	£285: 6:5	13%

Although lay patronage was considerably less extensive than ecclesiastical both in value and importance, it is in some respects more complicated to trace its history over the period 1311 to 1540. Table 6, which is inserted between pages 252 and 253 will serve to show how complicated were some of the descents of lay advowsons in addition - it is hoped - to providing a simple method of checking the holdings of advowsons over the period by each of the families concerned.

At least 32 families held the advowsons of rectories in the diocese of Durham during our period; one or two others may have been responsible for a few isolated and untraced presentations, but it is with this number of 32 that we shall be concerned in the present section. In 1311 21 of them were responsible for the presentation /

Table 6

Diocese of Durham.

Lay patrons, 1311-1540.

Patron (family)	Benefice (Rectory unless otherwise stated.)	Deanery	Valuation		Period during which advowson held. (Single dates are those of known presentations.)	Alienation to church	Remarks
			1291	1535			
Baard (Baart)	Middleton St. George	Darlington	£4: 0: 0	£3:13: 0	1359. Perhaps held until early 15c. (cf. sinecure rectory) and then to Killinghall		The fee of Middleton was divided between families of Baard and Cambe, the advowson of the incumbent rectory going to Cambe and of the sinecure to Baart; but as Cambe presented at least once to the incumbent rectory it too may have been divided. See also Cambe and Killinghall.
"	Middleton St. George (sinecure rectory).	Darlington	£9: 6: 8	No pre-Reformation presentations recorded after 1434.	1312, 1339. Probably held until early 15c. when passed to Killinghall.		

Bertram, baron of Bothal.	Bothal	Morpeth	£37: 0: 0	£25: 0: 0	Held until mid. 15c. when passed by marriage to Ogle, lord of Bothal.		See also Ogle
"	Sheepwash	Morpeth	?	£3:17: 0	Held until mid 15c. when passed by marriage to Ogle, lord of Bothal.		See also Ogle
Bowes	Elton	Darlington	£4: 6: 8	£7: 1: 4	1435. Held with manor by Gower until by 1435 both advowson and manor were divided between Gower and Bowes until 1540; there is an isolated presentation by Clifford in 1316.		See also Clifford and Gower.
"	Seaham	Durham	£30: 0: 0	£5: 0: 4 (vicarage)	Bowes succeeded to the Yeland and Dalden turn of presentation between 1438 and 1457, presenting in turn with Hadham until, probably, 1460x76, in which period the Duke of Gloucester became patron.	Coverham abbey, Yorks., 1476.	See also Dalden, Hadham, Royal family, Yeland.

Cambe	Middleton St. George	Darlington	£4: 0: 0	£3:13: 0	1312. Perhaps held (in turn with Baart?) until early 15c. (cf. sine-cure rectory) and then to Killinghall.		See also Baard and Killinghall.
Clifford (earl of Cumberland from 1535).	Elton	Darlington	£4: 6: 8	£7: 1: 4	1316 isolated presentation.		See also Bowes and Gower.
Dacre, Lord Dacre (of Graystock from 1493).	Ford	Bamborough	£83:13: 4	£24: 0: 0	Alienated to Dacre from Heron, lord of manor, in 1504; returned to lords of manor after the Reformation.		See also Heron.
"	Morpeth	Morpeth	£44:14:11	£32:16: 8	To Dacre from Graystock by marriage in 1493; held until 1540.		See also Graystock.
Dalden	Seaham	Durham	£30: 0: 0	£5: 0: 4 (vicarage)	Dalden succeeded to the Yalden turn of presentation some time before 1408 after which year it passed to various minor patrons by the female line until 1438x1457 when it was acquired by Bowes /	Coverham abbey, Yorks., 1476.	See also Bowes, Hadham Royal family, Yeland.

Dalden (contd.)					Bowes. The other turn of presentation was that of Hadham.		
Denton	Ingram	Alnwick	£53: 6: 8	£24:16: 5	In 1459 Denton succeeded to the Fenwick turn of presentation which was held until 1540. The other turns were those of Swinburne and Ogle.		See also Fenwick, Ogle and Swinburne
Fenwick	Ingram	Alnwick	£53: 6: 8	£24:16: 5	Held one of the three turns of presentation from 1387x1436 to 1459 when it passed to Denton. The other turns were those of Swinburne and Ogle. These turns represented a division of the Heton inheritance.		See also Denton, Heton Ogle and Swinburne.
FitzWilliam	Longhorsley	Morpeth	£33: 6: 8	£7:13: 4 (vicarage)	1315. By 1342 the advowson had passed to Neville.	Brinkburn priory 1386.	See also Graystock and Neville.

Gower	Elton	Darlington	£4: 6: 8	£7: 1: 4	1378, 1536. Held by Bowes and Gower in turn (1311-1540) although there is an isolated presentation by Clifford in 1316.		See also Bowes and Clifford.
Gray (lord of Tynedale).	Knaresdale	Corbridge	£10: 0: 0	£4:18: 8	1413, 1425; isolated presentation; for most of the period the advowson was in royal hands.		See also Royal family
Graystock, lord of Graystock and baron of Morpeth (successor of Merlay) until the estates passed by marr. to Dacre in 1493.	Longhorsley	Morpeth	£33: 6: 8	£7:13: 4 (vicarage)	1375. Held after 1367 when a presentation by Neville is recorded, but probably also before 1367, for the Graystocks held the manor from the 13c. Held until alienation to Brinkburn priory in 1386.	Brinkburn priory, 1386.	See also FitzWilliam and Neville.
"	Morpeth	Morpeth	£44:14:11	£32:16: 8	Held until Graystock estates passed to Dacre in 1493.		See also Dacre.

Hadham, lord of Seaham.	Seaham	Durham	£30: 0: 0	£5: 0: 4 (vicarage)	Held one of two turns of presentation until 1460x76 in which period the advowson of the rectory seems to have passed to the Duke of Glouces-ter, who alien-ated to Cover-ham.	Coverham abbey, Yorks., 1476.	See also Bowes, Dalden Royal family, Yeland.
Herle	Bolam	Morpeth	£28: 8: 5	£6:13: 4 (vicarage)	Held until 1359 when alienated to Blanchland abbey.	Blanchland abbey, 1359.	
Heron, Lord Heron, lord of manor of Ford.	Ford	Bamborough	£86:13: 4	£24: 0: 0	Held until 1504 when alienated to Dacre.		See also Dacre.
Heton, lord of manor of Ingram.	Ingram	Alnwick	£53: 6: 8	£24:16: 5	Held until some-time between 1387 and 1436 when it passed from the Hetons with the manor.		See also Denton, Fen-wick, Ogle and Swinburne
Hilton, Lord Hilton	Kirkhaugh	Corbridge	£4:16:10	£4: 7: 8	To Hilton by 1495 and held till 1540. Pre-viously held by Veteriponte and Stapleton.		See also Stapleton and Veteri-ponte.

Killinghall	Middleton St. George	Darlington	£4: 0: 0	£3:13: 0	1531. Probably came into Killinghall presentation in 15c. after period in that of Cambe and Baart.		See also Baard and Cambe.
"	Middleton St. George (sinecure rectory).	Darlington	£9: 6: 8	? No pre-Reformation presentations recorded after 1434.	1434. Probably passed to Killinghall from Baart in 15c. Possibly no presentations were made after 1434.		See also Baard.
Merlay	Stannington	Morpeth	£53: 2: 4½	£5:13: 4 (vicarage)	Held by Merlay until 1330 when granted to Newminster abbey by Roger de Somerville, the representative of Isabel de Merlay.	Newminster abbey 1330.	See also Somerville.
Neville, earl of Westmorland, etc.	Brancepeth	Durham	£53: 6: 8	£60:10: 4	1311-1540.		
	Durham, St. Mary in the South Bailey.	Durham	£4: 0: 0	£4:13: 4	1311-1540.		
"	Longhorsley	Morpeth	£33: 6: 8	£7:13: 4 (vicarage)	1342, 1366, 1367. Acquired by Neville from FitzWilliam 1315x42; passed to Graystock 1367x75.	Brinkburn priory, 1386.	See also FitzWilliam and Graystock.

Ogle, baron Ogle, Lord of Bothal from 15c.	Bothal	Morpeth	£37: 0: 0	£25: 0: 0	Acquired from Bertram in 15c. Held till 1540.		See also Bertram.
"	Hurworth	Darlington	£54: 0: 0	£27: 5: 4	May have had one in three turns of presentation; period uncertain.		See also Tailboys.
"	Ingram	Alnwick	£53: 6: 8	£24:16: 5	After the division of the Heton inheritance (1387x1436) Ogle held one in three turns of presentation.		See also Denton, Fenwick, Heton and Swinburne.
"	Sheepwash	Morpeth	?	£3:17: 0	Acquired from Bertram in 15c. Held till 1540.		See also Bertram.
Prat	Knaresdale	Corbridge	£10: 0: 0	£4:18: 8	In 1313 Prat presented as a tenant-in-chief of the King of Scotland to whom the advowson pertained in the 13c.		See also Gray and Royal family
Royal family	Haltwhistle	Corbridge	£61: 6: 8	£12: 3: 0 (vicarage)	Held by king until 1384 when it was alienated to Tynemouth priory.	Tynemouth priory, 1384.	After 1384 the bishop of Durham collated directly to the vicarage

Royal family	Knaresdale	Corbridge	£10: 0: 0	£4:18: 8	1315 (king), 1339 (queen), 1408 (Duke of York), 1536 (king). Seems to have been in royal presentation 1315-1540 except for the presentations by Gray, lord of Tynedale in 1413 and 1425. In 1313 Prat presented.		See also Gray and Prat.
"	Seaham	Durham	£30: 0: 0	£5: 0: 4 (vicarage)	Passed to Richard, Duke of Glouces-ter from Hadham and Bowes, probably 1460x76. Alienated to Coverham abbey, 1476.	Coverham abbey, Yorks., 1476.	See also Bowes, Dalde Hadham, Yeland.
"	Simonburn	Corbridge	£136: 4: 2	£34: 6: 8	1311-1351 (king); 1351-1482 (appropriated to St. George's Chapel, Windsor), 1482 (Richard, Duke of Gloucester), 1483-1540 (king).	Windsor, St. George's Chapel 1351-1482.	
Somerville	Longbenton	Newcastle	£31: 6: 6	£3: 1: 4 (vicarage)	Held by Somer-ville until alienation to Balliol College, Oxford, in 1339/40.	Oxford, Balliol College, 1339/40.	

Somerville	Stannington	Morpeth	£53: 2: 4½	£5:13: 4 (vicarage)	As representative of his grandmother, Isabel de Merlay, Roger de Somerville granted the advowson to Newminster abbey in 1330.	Newminster abbey, 1330.	See also Merlay.
Stapleton	Kirkhaugh	Corbridge	£4:16:10	£4: 7: 8	1422, 1433: these are only recorded dates of Stapleton presentations; the advowson seems usually to have been in the hands of the lord of the manor, which Stapleton was not. It was held by Veteriponte until early 14c. and by Hilton from (at latest) 1495.		See also Hilton and Veteriponte.
Swinburne	Ingram	Alnwick	£53: 6: 8	£24:16: 5	After the division of the Heton inheritance (1387x1436) Swinburne held one in three turns of presentation.		See also Denton, Fenwick, Heton and Ogle.

Tailboys, lord of manor of Hurworth and from 1436 lord of Redesdale	Elsdon	Corbridge	£90:16: 5	£20: 0: 0	To Tailboys from Umfraville with lordship of Redesdale in 1436; held till 1540.		See also Umfraville.
"	Hurworth	Darlington	£54: 0: 0	£27: 5: 4	In 1365 Tailboys was lord of manor of Hurworth and held 2 out of 3 turns of presentation; the other was probably held by Ogle. It seems likely that this arrangement lasted 1311-1540.		See also Ogle.
Umfraville, lord of Redesdale, earl of Angus.	Elsdon	Corbridge	£90:16: 5	£20: 0: 0	Held by Umfraville till 1436 when, on failure of the male line, it passed to Tailboys.		See also Tailboys.
"	Kirkwhelpington	Corbridge	£45:18:10	£7: 3: 4 (vicarage)	Held by Umfraville until alienation to Newminster abbey in 1334. Appropriated 1350; bishop had advowson of vicarage.	Newminster abbey, 1334.	
"	Ovingham	Corbridge	£96: 4:10½	£5: 8: 4 (vicarage)	Held by Umfraville until alienation to Hexham priory in 1378.	Hexham priory, 1378.	

Veteriponte, lord of manor of Kirkhaugh until early 14c.	Kirkhaugh	Corbridge	£4:16:10	£4: 7: 8	Passed from Veteriponte very early in the period 1311-1540. Later patrons uncertain. Stapleton in 1422 and 1433; Hilton from 1495.		See also Hilton and Stapleton.
Whitfield, lord of manor of Whitfield.	Whitfield	Corbridge	£9: 6: 8	£8: 0: 0	1311-1540.		
Yeland	Seaham	Durham	£30: 0: 0	£5: 0: 4 (vicarage)	Seems to have held one of two turns of presentation (the other was in the hands of Hadham) until it passed to Dalden some time before 1408.	Coverham abbey, Yorks., 1476.	

presentation of clerks to 23 rectories and in 1535 12 of them presented to 15.[1]

In the early 14th century most of the parishes whose churches were in lay gift could be divided into two groups: first, those around the western and southern borders of the diocese and, secondly, a fairly compact group in the lower Tyne valley and north of the river between the Pennine foothills and the coast. Of the latter group of eight churches - Longhorsley, Bothal, Sheepwash, Morpeth, Kirkwhelpington, Bolam, Stannington and Longbenton - only three - Bothal, Sheepwash and Morpeth - remained in lay hands after the alienations of the 14th century. On the other hand, only Haltwhistle among the border churches was permanently alienated during our period. The others, reading north to south and then west to east, were Ford, Ingram, Elsdon, Simonburn, Knaresdale, Whitfield, Kirkhaugh, Hurworth, Middleton St. George and Elton.

Several parishes, however, such as Brancepeth, St. Mary-the-Less, Durham, and Seaham do not fit into these two groups, and among those that do it is difficult to find any reason to account for the different histories of the advowsons. Among the churches which were appropriated in the course of the 14th century, some - for example, Stannington, Ovingham and Longhorsley - were situated close to the appropriating monasteries - Newminster, Hexham and Brinkburn - a point of some importance in the cases of Ovingham and Longhorsley, the /

[1] A few families presented to more than one rectory; while one or two of the benefices were attached to partitioned manors, and usually the holders of the portions of the fief took it in turns to present to the rectory.

the vicarages of which were served by canons of Hexham and Brinkburn respectively. Thus it may have been that the acquisition of these particular churches by the economically hard-pressed monasteries was at least partly the result of their proximity. Haltwhistle parish, on the other hand, is at the opposite side of the diocese from the priory of Tynemouth, to which it was alienated by the king in 1384,[1] and it is more likely that Tynemouth acquired the church of Haltwhistle through the influence of the mother house, St. Albans, in which there was a strong royal interest.[2] Each parish, each patron, each monastic house has to be in the last resort considered separately, for the motives which brought them together at the moment of alienation are too varied to be rigidly grouped.

Nor is it possible to give any overriding reason why those churches which remained in lay advowson throughout our period escaped alienation. Even such of them as had in common the geographical fact of being situated around the diocesan boundary varied considerably in nature. From the small and not very valuable parishes of Elton and Middleton St. George in Teesdale they range to the enormous Tynedale and Redesdale parishes of Simonburn and Elsdon which, valued at the very high figures of £136:4:2 and £90:16:5 respectively in 1291, had collapsed in value by 1535 to £34:6:8 and £20. In view of what we may literally call the "reduced circumstances" of these two parishes, situated as they were in /

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[1] C.P.R. 1381-5, p. 492.

[2] In fact the official support of the priory's appeal for Haltwhistle came from the king's uncle, the earl of Buckingham. (Ibid.)

in the wildest of the dale country, their apparent inability to attract the advowson-hunting monastic houses is not surprising. Admittedly Simonburn was appropriated for over a century to St. George's Chapel, Windsor, but in 1482 it was disappropriated on the ostensible and not implausible grounds that the upkeep of the parish and the cure of souls of the vicarage was costing the chapel more than it could draw in revenue from the fruits.[1] There is, perhaps, a certain significance in the fact that without exception the more valuable of the non-alienated churches on the diocesan boundary suffered catastrophic reductions in value during our period. Elsdon and Simonburn have already been mentioned, and in addition, between 1291 and 1535, Ford dropped from £86:13:4 to £24, Hurworth from £54 to £27:5:4 and Ingram from £53:6:8 to £24:16:5. Such financial depression, together with the isolated location of most of these parishes, made for conditions which - if they attracted anybody - would attract a rector who intended not to reside rather than a perpetual vicar who canonically had no option but to reside. The smaller perimeter parishes suffered on the whole less steep drops in value over the period;[2] but as they were even in 1291 of very little worth they did not thereby gain appreciably in attractiveness over their larger neighbours. On the other hand the sizeable parishes of Bothal and Morpeth near the east coast to the north-west of Tynemouth, and Brancepeth, which formed a large island of lay /

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[1] See above, pp. 177, 180.

[2] Elton even rose in monetary value: £4:6:8 to £7:1:4.

lay patronage in the middle of the ocean of episcopal and priory churches in the palatinate, were all well endowed in the late 13th century and more or less remained so; the rectory of Brancepeth even appreciating in value from £53:6:8 in 1291 to £60:10:4 in 1535. They were all, interestingly enough, in the gift of members of the most powerful northern families - Brancepeth in the gift of the Nevilles, Bothal in that of the Bertrams (and later the Ogles), barons of Bothal, and Morpeth in that of the Graystocks, lords of Graystock and barons of Morpeth, until 1493, when it was transferred by marriage to the Lords Dacre of Graystock.

Politically the most powerful lay patron was, of course, the king, and with him we may consider other members of the royal family and household. As will be clear from table 6, four parochial benefices came under some form of royal patronage during our period. Least important was the rectory of Seaham, in county Durham, which was alienated to Coverham Abbey in Yorkshire in 1476 by Richard, Duke of Gloucester. There is, however, no record of Gloucester's having presented any rectors before this time, the manor and the advowson having been divided between the families of Hadham and Bowes before 1460. Why the advowson should have passed to Gloucester is not clear (the manor did not change hands with it[1]) and it seems likely that the duke acquired it with the intention of making it over to the monks of Coverham.

The other three benefices in royal gift passed from the king of /

[1] Surtees, op.cit., i, pp. 269-70.

of Scotland to the king of England along with the lordship of Tynedale, in which all three were situated. The two most valuable - Haltwhistle and Simonburn - were alienated in the 14th century, Haltwhistle to the priory of Tynemouth in 1384 and Simonburn to St. George's Chapel, Windsor, in 1351. Haltwhistle, the smaller and more southerly, seems to have preserved its value better than Simonburn, for its vicarage was valued at £12:3:0 in 1535, while the entire rectory of Simonburn rated only £34:6:8. As we have seen, the latter benefice returned to the royal family in 1482 by way of the Duke of Gloucester, who did not in fact use it to endow a collegiate church at Barnard Castle.[1] The smaller parish of Knaresdale, which was worth only £10 in 1291 and £4:18:8 in 1535 remained in the royal gift and rectors were instituted during our period on the presentation of the king, the queen (Queen Isabella in 1339 and 1361), Edward, Duke of York (in 1408) and by Thomas and Lady Isabella Gray (1413 and 1425 respectively) who held the lordship of Tynedale at this period as tenants in chief of the crown.[2]

Knaresdale was not alone among the three royal advowsons in Northumberland in having its turns of presentation "shared" between members of the royal family. Over Haltwhistle in the early years of the 14th century there was an additional complication in that the abbey of Arbroath in Scotland seems to have still been pressing its claim to the advowson - and indeed the appropriation - of the rectory /

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[1] See above, pp. 177, 180.

[2] R.L. ff. 63-63v; M.C. 6887w.

rectory, which dated from the time when Tynedale was a franchise of the king of Scotland.[1] Later in 1361 we find Queen Philippa presenting John de Ledicombe to the rectory, and in 1378/9 Edmund Langley, earl of Cambridge, the king's uncle, presented John Dayvill;[2] moreover, two of the three rectors who held the benefice between Ledicombe and Dayvill were in the service or clientele of John of Gaunt,[3] and although it is not recorded that he presented them, it is little short of certain that he was responsible for their presentation. The king or the chancellor seems usually to have presented to the rectory of Simonburn while it was in the royal gift, although in 1342 the queen presented her secretary, John Blanchard of Clisseby as, three years earlier, she had presented him to the rectory of Knaresdale.[4] In the early 14th century the appointments to Simonburn rectory provide an interesting glimpse into the workings of influence and place-hunting in the royal "civil service." Between 1311 and 1314 Edward I's chancellor, chancellor of the exchequer, treasurer and chamberlain of Scotland, John de Sandale, occurs as rector,[5] and when he resigned upon becoming bishop of Winchester in 1316 his successor was his lieutenant as /

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1 Cf. R.P.D. i, pp. 91; 467-8, 479, etc., where the incumbents are referred to as vicars.

2 R.H. f. 52; C.P.R. 1370-4, p. 127.

3 R.H. ff. 64v, 160v.

4 R.P.D. iii, pp. 422-3.

5 Ibid., i, p. 612; ii, pp. 874-5; C.P.L. ii, pp. 88, 119.

as treasurer, Gilbert de Sandale, who was probably also his nephew; indeed the attestation of the royal precept of presentation was contained in a letter from the chancellor himself.[1] Perhaps the most unusual of the presentations to Simonburn, however, was that of John Ridley in 1532, which was made by Thomas Ridley, gentleman (no doubt a relative), who was patron for the turn under a grant from King Henry VIII to John Corson, and John and Thomas Ridley.[2] Although, as we have seen, some of the monasteries were alienating their advowsons for single turns usually to members of the local gentry, this is the only occasion on which the king so alienated one of his advowsons in the diocese of Durham.

It is unfortunate that the scantiness of our information about many of the incumbents of these benefices makes it difficult to be sure what proportion of appointments on royal presentation went to royal clerks. The practice of disposing of benefices in the royal gift so as to provide salaries for government clerical officials was well established in the England of the later middle ages, and the benefices in the diocese of Durham were not excluded from the system. From the available evidence, however, it is possible merely to show that of thirteen clerks presented to the rectory of Simonburn between 1311 and 1540 by the king or other members of the royal family only four were definitely in the service of their patron. The equivalent figures for the rectories of Knaresdale and /

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[1] C.P.R. 1313-17, p. 555; cf. D.N.B. s.n. John de Sandale.
[2] R.T. f. 9v.

and Haltwhistle are nineteen and three, and eight and two.[1] Thus it would seem that a little under a quarter of the clerks appointed on royal presentation were government officials. But while we cannot be sure that any of the other three quarters of the incumbents were royal servants or royal clients, neither does evidence make it certain that they were not. Even in the case of John de Ebchester, rector of Knaresdale, 1375 (-1395?), who was a clerk of Henry, Lord Percy,[2] there can be no certainty that he was never in the royal service during a period which was marked by a tendency for administrative clerks to move freely between the royal and baronial households.[3] Thus the evidence of the figures cannot be regarded as final, and the proportion of royal clerks among the incumbents of the benefices we have been discussing was probably larger than 25%. Even so, it seems likely that the royal advowsons in Tynedale were rather less attractive financially than those further to the south. They suffered from the depression of the wars and raids, and while their bleakness and size need not in themselves /

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[1] Although the king definitely presented Robert de Dyghton in 1319, there is considerable confusion in the records up to the episcopate of Hatfield about the living of Haltwhistle, chiefly over the question whether it was a rectory in the royal gift or - as it had been when Tynedale was a franchise of the king of Scotland - a vicarage under a rectory appropriated to the abbey of Arbroath. (See below, vol. 2, under Haltwhistle.) Thus the eight incumbents mentioned above cover only the period from about 1350 to 1384, when the rectory was granted to Tynemouth priory.

[2] R.H. f. 84v.

[3] E.g. John Willicotes of Great Tew, Oxfordshire, successively retainer of Thomas, Lord Despenser, steward of the earl of Stafford, pensioner of the earl marshall, and Henry V's receiver general of /

themselves have deterred a rector whose main duties lay at Westminster, the expense of providing chaplain-curates for the several chapelries which were attached to the larger benefices would prove a serious drain on their already depleted revenues.[1] A small and wealthy parish with few incidental expenses was the civil servant's ideal, and the Tynedale benefices could hardly measure up to it.

Most of the rectories in lay patronage served parishes in Northumberland; a topographical proportion which was also noticeably applicable to the estates of the patrons outside of the royal family. This state of affairs is what we might expect, bearing in mind the fact that so much land in the palatine came under the direct control of the church.

Not that the lay patrons of county Durham were of unimportant families, including as they did the lords of Tailboys and the barons of Hilton, and, moreover, the only two non-royal patron families in the diocese to reach the rank of earl - the Nevilles, earls of Westmorland (and much else besides in the 15th century) and the Cliffords, earls of Cumberland from 1535. It is perhaps unfair to include the Cliffords, since they were responsible during our period only for a single presentation to the rectory of Elton in 1316 - and /

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of the Duchy of Cornwall. (K. B. McFarlane, Bastard feudalism (B.I.H.R xx) p. 172.)

[1] There were at least four such chapels in the parish of Simonburn, which may have accounted for the college of St. George's, Windsor's, desire to get rid of it in 1482. (Neville Hadcock, A map of mediaeval Northumberland and Durham (A.A. ser. 4, xvi) p. 183.)

and as the head of the family was a minor this presentation was in fact made by the king.[1] The Nevilles, on the other hand, were the undisputed patrons of Brancepeth and St. Mary in the South Bailey, Durham, throughout our period.

Against this Northumberland can set on the social scale five baronial families: the Umfravilles, lords paramount of Redesdale and earls of Angus, the Bertrams, barons of Bothal (succeeded in this title by Ogles), the Graystocks, barons of Morpeth and Graystock (succeeded in the latter title by the Dacres). And, if we ignore titles and wealth and consider number only, we find that of thirty-one non-royal families who held parochial patronage in the diocese of Durham in the later middle ages, nineteen were of Northumberland and twelve of county Durham.

The obvious reason why families tended to hold advowsons in the same county as their estates was the attachment of most churches to manors in the early feudal tenurial system. Built and financed by the lord of the manor, the patronage of these churches was in the hands of that lord;[2] and in our period most of the advowsons in /

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[1] R.P.D. ii, pp. 1123-4; C.P.R. 1313-17, p. 550.

[2] The subject of the mediaeval proprietary church, although a basic study in the elucidation of patronage, is too wide for general treatment here. The reader is referred in the first place to Barraclough, Papal provisions, Stutz, The proprietary church as an element of mediaeval Germanic ecclesiastical law (in Mediaeval Germany, ed. Barraclough, ii) and Barlow, Durham jurisdictional peculiars.

in the diocese of Durham which were in lay patronage were still attached to manors. The exceptions more or less go to prove the rule; for although there was no manor of Elsdon the advowson of the rectory went with the lordship of Redesdale, and a similar arrangement was to be found applied to advowsons in the liberty of Tynedale. Thus the advowsons descended from patron to patron according as the lordship of the manor passed by inheritance, marriage or alienation from one family to another, and the genealogical history of the manor is very largely also that of the advowson. Of the thirteen advowsons which were in lay but not royal hands in 1530 only one - that of Ford rectory - was in the gift of a family which did not hold the lordship of the appropriate manor or its equivalent; and Ford, which had been alienated in 1504 to the family of Dacre, lords of Graystock, by the Herons, lords of the manor of Ford, returned after the Reformation into the possession of the holder of the manor.[1]

It is therefore possible to explain the descent of these thirteen advowsons by reference to the descent of the manors, which was dictated by genealogical development and not by any such forcible deprivation as legal forfeiture which had, for example, accounted for the redistribution of the Bruce and Balliol properties in the palatinate. This is also true of the advowsons of those churches which were alienated to monasteries during the 14th and 15th centuries - that is to say, up to the time when they were so alienated.

During /

[1] N.C.H. xi, p. 349.

During our period three factors prevented the establishment of any rigid pattern in lay patronage; the occasional transfer of the gift of churches from one branch of a family to another as the male line of the original branch came to an end; its division among heiresses; and its passage by marriage intact or divided to other families by the marriage of heiresses (which meant, usually, that incumbents were presented by each "part-patron" in turn). Families such as Umfraville and Baart lost their patronage for lack of heirs; while others, such as Hilton and Killinghall, filled their places, and the Tailboys increased their patronage from one to two advowsons.[1] There was, however, no significant alteration in the social composition of the patrons. Of the twenty families who held advowsons in 1311 (excluding the royal family), eight were of peerage rank; while in 1540 five out of the total of eleven enjoyed this distinction. In 1311 these eight peerage families presented to eleven out of the twenty benefices in lay but not royal gift; and in 1540 the five peers presented to nine out of the thirteen churches whose advowsons remained to the laity; so that the proportion of lay advowsons in peerage hands had increased by about 15 per cent. But of these peerage families only the house of Neville was of national fame and importance and only the Nevilles, the Umfravilles and the Tailboys had important interests outside of the north of England.[2] The others - although some /

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[1] See above, table 6.

[2] G. E. Cokayne, Complete peerage, i, pp. 146-151; xii, pt. 1, p. 602.

some, such as the Ogles or Bertrams, enjoyed considerable power and influence - had interests which were mainly local and not essentially different from those of the gentry.

Nor should it be supposed that the most valuable advowsons were always held by the most important families. At the end of our period the Dentons and Swinburnes held two out of three turns of presentation to the rectory of Ingram, which was valued at £53:6:8 in 1291 and £24:16:5 in 1535. The possession of an advowson was too much of a genealogical lottery to permit of an entirely rational plan of acquisition, and out of the twelve advowsons of parish churches which changed hands between the laity during our period only one was transferred from an extinct male line for reasons other than the normal ones of marriage and descent. Thus in a very real sense the patrons did not choose their patronage; it was a legacy to them from their genealogical history and the land acquisitions and church foundations of their ancestors.

When we consider the often confused history of the descent of some of the advowsons, the number of disputes between rival lay claimants to patronage seems comparatively small. Three of them involved the king as one of the parties. In 1319 the king presented William Kirkby, later the queen's treasurer, to the rectory of Longbenton under the mistaken impression that the lands of the late Edward Somerville were in royal hands because of the minority of the /

the heir; but the presentation was revoked when this contention was disproved.[1] Forty four years later, in 1363, a more serious dispute arose between the crown and the families of Ogle, Tailboys, and Hatfield over the advowson of Hurworth, a dispute which seems eventually to have been decided in favour of the Ogles and the Tailboys although the crown made the next presentation in 1369.[2] The brief contest for the rectory of Knaresdale in 1315 between John de Crosseby, the candidate of the king, and Hugh de Swynburn, presented by John Prat, tenant in chief of the king of Scotland, was a result of the transfer of the liberty of Tynedale from the Scottish crown to the English, and was settled in favour of Crosseby.[3] This transfer of Tynedale was also at the root of the confusion over the patronage of Haltwhistle rectory during the first three decades of our period, when it is not clear whether the rectory was in the royal gift or appropriated to the abbey of Arbroath.[4] All of these disputes involved the crown, and so far as the records show, the only dispute over advowsons between lay families other than the king's occurred over the rectory of Ingram during the twenty years following the division of the Heton manor of Ingram between the families of Fenwick, Swinburne and Ogle, when there was confusion over the turns of presentation.[5] Apart from the occasions of these disputes, the only notable deprivation of presentation /

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1 C.P.R. 1317-21, pp. 262, 312.
2 R.H. ff. 59, 153v-154v.
3 R.P.D. ii, pp. 791-4, 811-4; C.P.R. 1313-17, p. 364.
4 See below, vol. 2, under Haltwhistle.
5 See below, vol. 2, under Ingram.

presentation rights suffered by any of the lay patrons with whom we are dealing occurred in 1450, when Francis Condulmier, bishop of Porto and nephew of Pope Eugenius IV, was provided by his uncle to the rectory of Ford over the head of the patron family, the Herons - a result of the death at Rome of the last vicar, Emeric Burrell.[1] This provision was, of course, perfectly legitimate,[2] and the same may be said of the frequent royal presentations to many benefices when the patronwas a minor in royal custody.

The majority of presentations which are recorded, however, were normal ones carried out by the legal patrons, and little need be said about them. As might be expected, the more important nobles, who had secretaries and lawyers to provide for, occasionally used the benefices in their gift as salaries, as, for example, when Richard Drax, a trustee of the Neville estates, was given the valuable rectory of Brancepeth,[3] or when John de Pikeworth in the thirteen-sixties and seventies was presented by Sir Gilbert Umfraville to the rectories of Alwinton, Elsdon and Ovingham and William Stodefeld to that of Elsdon, both men to receive shortly after their appointments episcopal leave of absence on their patron's service.[4] At this point, however, it is necessary to recall what was said about the inadequacy of the records of incumbents to benefices in the royal gift.[5] This is also true of our information about /

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1 F.D.
2 Cf. Mollat, Les papes d'Avignon (1949), p. 527.
3 F.D.
4 R.H. ff. 51, 68, 76v, 77v, 81.
5 See above, pp. 259-260.

about the incumbents of benefices in lay patronage, and once again, while it is probable that a higher percentage of the rectors of these benefices than is evident from the records were in fact members of the households of the patrons, it is unlikely that the proportion was large. To the clerks of the baronial household, as to those of the royal court, most of the Durham benefices in lay gift were not very attractive.

Since the evidence is very largely in their names, it is possible to speak with greater assurance about the other notable class of clergy which was presented by the lay patrons, that is, members of the patron's family. Several of these patrons, of whatever their status, presented relatives to the rectory or rectories in their gift.[1] But it is noticeable that the type of patron family most prone to make a practice of "family presentation" was the lord of the manor with fairly exclusively local ties, possessed of the advowson of only one parish church and the holder of the patronage over a long period of time. In the diocese of Durham these were the three families of Hadham, Heron and Whitfield, lords of the manors and patrons of the churches of, respectively, Seaham (until c.1400), Ford (until 1504) and Whitfield (throughout our period). During the periods in which they held these advowsons, the Hadhams presented at least two and possibly three, the Herons six /

[1] Those who did so not more than once to the same benefice during our period were the Somervilles, Bertrams, Ogles, Nevilles, Bowes and Dacres. (See below, vol. 2, under Longbenton, Bothal, Brancepeth, Elton, Ingram, Middleton St. George and Morpeth.)

six and the Whitfields three members of their families to these churches.[1]

Thus more appointments were made to benefices in lay gift from the local families than from the more highly qualified clergy. Once again this suggests that most of these benefices did not attract many clerks from the south: such of these as could afford to pick and choose or were lucky acquired southern churches.

Before concluding this survey of the lay patrons of parish churches in the diocese of Durham, it is important to note one family which was not such a patron - namely the great house of Percy, barons of Alnwick and later earls of Northumberland. One of the two most important families of the north of England, and the greatest of all the lay tenants in chief of the diocese, the Percies had alienated all of their parochial advowsons around Alnwick before our period begins. Again it was not that the Percies despised ecclesiastical patronage, but rather that their most important interests lay to the south of the Tees in Yorkshire, where they had the patronage of many churches. This natural preference for the south becomes obvious not only in their disposal of their Northumberland advowsons, but also in their attempts to have their clerks appointed to benefices in ecclesiastical gift. Their aim was to induce the priors of Durham to present their protégés to the monastery's Yorkshire and Lincolnshire churches, and, as will be shown in the following section, this aim - which was not that of the Percies alone /

[1] See below, vol. 2, under Seaham, Ford and Whitfield.

alone - was one of the characteristics of the attempts to influence the priory's direct exercise of its patronage, or, in other words, to acquire "indirect" patronage.

Part 3. Occasional and indirect patronage.

The present section deals with presentations to rectories, vicarages, deaneries, canonries and archdeaconries in the diocese of Durham which were either not made by the legally authorised patron or which, if made by him, were the result of an outside suggestion. The use of the term "legally authorised patron" is not intended to imply that all or even the majority of such presentations were illegal, although as a matter of fact some of them did give rise to litigation. There were perfectly legitimate reasons for the occasional exercise of the rights of advowson by someone other than their usual possessors, and much of what follows will be designed to differentiate these reasons.

First, however, let us consider the evidence of indirect patronage, by which is meant the influencing of regular patrons in their presentations by third parties who stood therefore in the position of sponsors to the candidates.

(i) Indirect patronage.

The statistical approach to the evidence, which has been employed throughout most of the present chapter, cannot be rigidly applied /

applied to the material with which we are now concerned. This material is neither plentiful nor precise enough to form a basis for any kind of exact figures or ratios, and the one point about which we can be fairly certain is that the period 1311 to 1540 saw a greater number of attempts at influencing the patrons than is recorded in these pages, or, indeed in the extant documentary evidence. It has already been indicated that our main sources for the exercise of patronage are the records of presentation, institution and induction which are contained in bulk in the bishops' registers. While these records will normally tell us the name of the patron, the incumbent and his predecessor, the nature and designation of the benefice and the terms of tenure; there is no guarantee that they will tell us the patron's reason for his choice of a clerk, unless they record the fact that the clergyman was one of his servants or clients. On most occasions the ultimate reason for the selection was not given and the presentation document merely recorded the patron's conventional testimony that his choice had fallen upon N because of the latter's piety, good character, intellectual qualities and so forth. Sometimes, however - usually, it seems, when important people were involved - the bishop's register of presentations penetrated behind the facade, as when two presentations by the abbot of St. Mary's, York, to the rectory of Middleton-in-Teesdale were said to be on the nomination of the earl of Warwick.[1] But unfortunately the six Durham episcopal registers which /

[1] In 1379 and 1432/3. (R.H. f. 156v; R.L. ff. 202v-203.)

which have survived for our period very rarely give such information, and for most of the source material on indirect patronage we must rely on records which are less formal and - a more serious defect - form less continuous series than the runs of presentation documents.

Most of these records consist of letters written to the prior of Durham usually by the king and by nobles who wished to recommend their clerks to the monks for presentation to churches in their gift; sometimes they take the form of the prior's replies to these letters. The chief group has been preserved in a box of documents in the archives of the dean and chapter of Durham, known since its sixteenth century classification as Locellus XXV.[1] Among these documents are some seventy which record attempts to influence the monks of Durham in the exercise of their patronage. Few of them are dated by year, but they were all received at Durham during John Wessington's tenure of the priorate - that is, between the years 1416 and 1446. Through them we are able to form at least some idea of the kind of pressure which was brought to bear upon one of the most important patrons in the diocese of Durham during a short part of our period. It would, of course, be dangerous to apply beyond these limits any conclusions which may be drawn from the documents in Locellus XXV - at any rate without confirmation from other sources.

The most obvious and most significant point which emerges is that /

[1] A short note on the Locelli will be found in the bibliography. (See below, p. 479.)

that the indirect patrons were much more interested in having their clerical proteges appointed to the priory's churches in Yorkshire and Lincolnshire than to its benefices within the diocese of Durham. Out of 69 applications to the prior from would-be patrons only 5 asked specifically that the clergyman proposed for preferment should be presented to a benefice north of the Tees. Ten others merely asked to "a benefice" or "the next vacant benefice" in the gift of the prior and convent, and in the event none of the ten candidates named in these letters received a benefice in Durham or Northumberland. The remaining applications were all for churches in Yorkshire or Lincolnshire, and by far the most popular benefices were the canonries and prebends in the collegiate churches of Howden and Hemingbrough in Yorkshire, which were, of course, without cure of souls,[1] and did not involve perpetual residence.

The fact that most of the churches asked for in the documents of Locellus XXV were not in the diocese of Durham naturally restricts their usefulness for our purpose, so that we must find other sources to provide most of our information about the indirect patrons of Durham benefices, what kind of benefices they wanted, and to what extent their applications were successful. Among the five applications for benefices in the diocese of Durham mentioned above, one was unsuccessful - the attempt by both the earl and countess of Northumberland to have the countess's chaplain, Sir John of Wearmouth /

[1] Churches for which a vicar had to be provided if the canon did not propose to look after the cure of souls himself were attached however to some of these prebends - e.g. Skipwith in Howden. (Loc. xxv, no. 71.)

mouth, presented to the vicarage of Billingham upon an exchange of benefices. It appears from a letter addressed by the earl to Prior Wessington that one Robert Jakeson[1] among others was attempting to influence the priory against the countess's clerk, and they were evidently successful.[2] Of the ten applications for unspecified churches in the gift of the priory, four were made by the king, and at least three of these were on behalf of royal officials, two of whom - Abel Hesill and Robert Lancastyr - were privy seal clerks.[3] Two were made by the queen, although one was in support of an original recommendation of William Pelleson, LL.D., by the countess of Kent.[4] The other four were petitions by the constable of England (John FitzRoy), one John Marshall, the archbishop of York and the bishop of Lincoln respectively.[5] In fact, the recommendation of the archbishop was really a surrogation of John Soulby to the expectation of a benefice in the priory's gift which had been held by Thomas Key (or Kaye), a relative of the archbishop who had died. The four clerks nominated in the last-mentioned group of applications /

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[1] Probably the same as the Robert Jacson who induced the prior and convent to present his clerk, Thomas March, to the vicarage of Dalton-le-Dale in 1435. (See below, p. 281.)

[2] Loc. xxv, nos. 144, 159; and see below, vol. 2, under Billingham.

[3] Ibid., nos. 98, 166, 91, 95.

[4] Ibid., nos. 105, 106. Pelleson was dean of Lanchester from March until November, 1417. (See below, vol. 2, under Lanchester.)

[5] Loc. xxv, nos. 111, 45, 50, 83.

applications were noticeably all academics,[1] none were local men and, as has been stated, none succeeded in obtaining a benefice from the priory.

A certain amount of information on indirect patronage which does not appear in either the episcopal registers or Locellus XXV may be obtained from one or two entries in the Registrum Parvum or Letter Book of the prior and convent of Durham, the Miscellaneous Charters of the monks, other Locelli and a very few items in the royal records.

An entry in the Calendar of Patent Rolls for 6th April, 1333, tells us how a royal presentation of the king's clerk, Walter de Langcestre, to the rectory of Middleton-in-Teesdale was revoked and the clerk was instead nominated - successfuly, it appears - by the king to the patron (the abbey of St. Mary's, York) for presentation in due form.[2] In 1447 William Freston was assured by a letter of the prior of Durham that the monks were bearing in mind the recommendation of the king and queen that he be presented to a benefice in their gift. Meanwhile, until such time as a benefice was available, they would pay him a pension, and - evidently he was a persistent individual - "it shall not", the prior gently suggests, "be necessary to labour the king nor the queen no more in this matter upon reason."[3]

It does not appear, however, that the magnates and gentry were remiss /

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[1] They were: John Rikynghale, D. Theol., John Paynell, U.I.B., John Soulby, M.A., and John Frye, M.A.

[2] C.P.R. 1330-34, pp. 397, 426.

[3] R.P. ii, ff. 11v-12.

remiss in pressing the claims of their chosen clerks. The nephew of the earl of Northumberland, for example, asked in the same letter - of 9 September, c.1440 - for a vicarage for one of his protégés and for a pension and a prebend for another. Sir William Hakforth, a priest of this member of the house of Percy, had just resigned the vicarage of Giggleswick in Yorkshire, recommending as his successor Sir Christopher Altam, who was thereupon suggested by Percy to the patron, the prior and convent of Durham, together with a request that, as the retiring vicar, Hakforth should have a pension from the church (not, it might be remarked, the vicarage, so that the monks would probably be the losers) and also that he might be presented to the next vacant prebend in the collegiate church of Hemingbrough. The prior in his reply acceded to the requests for the vicarage and the pension but in the meantime turned down the other on the grounds that there was already a substantial waiting list for Hemingbrough prebends sponsored by the king, the bishop of Durham, the earl of Northumberland - that is the present applicant's own uncle - and Sir William Eure.[1] Apart from the unusually large number of petitions contained in the one letter, this instance of indirect patronage is interesting for two reasons. In the first place it provides two local examples of the famous or notorious attempts by the magnates and the gentry to have their younger sons appointed to ecclesiastical benefices: both the earl of Northumberland and Sir William Eure had advanced their sons to the prior of Durham /

[1] Ibid., i, ff. 128v-129.

Durham as candidates for the next vacant prebends in the college of Hemingbrough. Secondly, it illustrates what seems to have been a common obstacle to the effectiveness of indirect patronage, especially over valuable or more than usually desirable benefices: namely, the fact that so many aspiring indirect patrons competed for the favour of the legal patron that the latter was in a position, if he so desired, to pick and choose between the candidates placed before him and, presumably, please the most influential of the petitioners, or even on occasion present the best qualified clerk. Even the king's candidates, however, had sometimes to wait their turn and were the subject of more than one application.[1] Unfortunately the evidence available for benefices in the diocese of Durham does not permit us to reach any hard and fast conclusions to the effect, say, that either all recommendations took their turn or that the benefices requested were filled on a priority system related solely to the status of the indirect patron. It is evident, however, that the number of applications for their more important benefices meant that the monks of Durham were rarely short of an excuse for not acceding to any particular request.

Moreover, it seems to have been not unknown for the prior of Durham to ask for a quid pro quo in patronage. The appointment to the Yorkshire vicarage of Bossall in 1477 provides an interesting example of several simultaneous cross-currents of lay and clerical patronage. As much of the story as we have is contained in three documents /

[1] Cf. ibid., ii, ff. 11v-12.

documents transcribed in the Registrum Parvum of the priory. In the first, dated 19 March 1476/7, Richard Bell, the prior, replied to a letter of Anne, duchess of Gloucester, asking that her chaplain be presented by the monks. The prior asked her forgiveness for having by an oversight neglected her request and presented another clerk - Sir William Laxe - to the vicarage. However, the archbishop of York had taken exception to the form of presentation and refused to institute, and, the case being sub judice, nothing further could be done in the meantime. The letter ended by assuring the duchess - for whom and her husband, later King Richard III, the monks of Durham in common with most opinion in the north of England seem to have had no small regard[1] - that her protégé would have either the vicarage of Bossall "or another as good when it shall fall in our gift."[2]

Ten days later, in a letter dated 29 March 1477, the prior made an effort to break the deadlock with the archbishop by requesting William Lawe, the warden of Durham College, Oxford, to go to London and point out to the prelate, with the aid of documentary evidence and a competent lawyer, that the form of presentation was entirely in accordance with precedent and that the word "obedience", which the archbishop wished to have inserted, had never been so used before. But, added the prior, it might be as well if the warden first /

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[1] The duke was the prior's "gracious good lord" in letters of 1475 and in the same year the monks sent a letter of sisterhood to the duchess. (Script. Tres, App., nos. cclxx, cclxxi, cclxxii.)

[2] R.P. ii, f. 172v.

first sought out in London the bishop of Durham and enlisted his support, and in addition he should acquaint the archbishop with the interest of the duke and duchess in the benefice.[1]

The efforts of both the prior and his representative were in vain at this stage, however, and on the 11th of April Prior Bell seems to have decided in the face of archiepiscopal firmness to cut his losses and jettison the claim of Laxe. Determined, nevertheless, not to yield on the question of the terms of the presentation deed, he now wrote to the duchess informing her that he would present her nominee in the same form as he had earlier presented the other chaplain. The intention of obtaining the Gloucesters' full support of the prior's case against the archbishop is too obvious to require stressing. But this is not all; for in the same letter the prior took the opportunity of asking the duchess to present to her husband his nephew and the bearer of the present missive and to request the duke to give him a position among his servants. Not, Prior Bell was careful to add, that he expected the duke and duchess to be at any great expense on the youth's behalf; he merely wished that his nephew should enjoy the normal advantages and the prestige of being the duke's man.[2] But however modest the prior's demands for his relative may have been, it is evident that he planned to get just as much as he could in return for his slight defeat over Laxe's presentation to Bossall.

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[1] Ibid., f. 175.
[2] Ibid., f. 175 bis.

The documents in the Registrum do not go into detail about what form the "obedience" took, which the prior was so resolved not to mention in his letter of presentation. Presumably it stated or implied an acknowledgement of authority claimed by the archbishop of York in the administration of the priory's Yorkshire franchise,[1] and if so the case forms an interesting example of how the system of presentation and patronage could influence and be influenced by the local constitutional politics of the church.

From these few cases, some impression may be obtained of the operation of lay influence in the exercise of patronage by the priory of Durham during the 15th century. There is unfortunately no Locellus XXV for the earlier part of our period and the Registrum Parvum is a 15th and early 16th century record. Among the Miscellaneous Charters, however, there is an interesting document dated 9 Kal. Feb. (24 January) 1330/31[2] in which John Loudon, the mayor, and the communitas of Berwick-upon-Tweed, declare that, whereas the prior and convent of Durham have presented John de Edirham to the vicarage of Berwick at their request, this presentation shall not prejudice the future rights of the monks as patrons, in which status, indeed, they are explicitly recognised by the citizens.[3] This is the /

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[1] For a brief treatment of this franchise and the priory's relationship with the archbishop of York, see above, pp. 134-135, 153-154.

[2] M.C. 5983.

[3] The rectory of Berwick was in fact appropriated to Durham's Scottish cell of Coldingham, but the advowson of the vicarage was in the hands of the prior of Durham. (See below, vol. 2.)

the only record we have of the citizens of Berwick sponsoring the priest of their parish church. It is interesting not only for its uniqueness and for the precautions which it takes to safeguard the rights of the true patron, but also for its concluding statement that the citizens of Berwick will help to augment the portion of their chosen vicar. Since the vicarage was - at any rate in the 13th century - a valuable one,[1] it is probable that the priory of Durham was not unwilling to appoint a local nominee if the burghers were prepared to help to maintain him. It may be, indeed, that this undertaking to help to support the incumbent is the main explanation of what is one of the very few examples of anyone other than royalty, magnates and prelates successfully sponsoring candidates for parochial benefices which were not in their own gift. No other example has been found of members of the burgher class taking part in the exercise of indirect patronage on their own behalf, although in or just before 1435 John Brownflete of Wearmouth wrote to Prior Washington in support of the request of his friend Robert Jacson, a member of the local gentry, that Jacson's priest, Thomas March, be presented by the monks to their vacant vicarage of Dalton-le-Dale.[2] The petitions of Jacson and Brownflete were successful, and in 1435 March was duly inducted.[3]

Nearly all of the petitions addressed to the patrons which we have /

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1 It was valued at £13:6:8 in 1274. (Theiner, Vetera Monumenta, no. 264.)
2 Loc. xxv, no. 24.
3 Mag.Rep. Ad.D., 1a 2e, 29.

have so far considered have been made to the prior and convent of Durham. But the abbey of St. Mary's York was also successfully petitioned, twice by the king and twice by the earl of Warwick, for the presentation to the rectory of Middleton-in-Teesdale;[1] while in 1333 the bishop of Durham, at the request of Queen Isabella, collated John Wawayn, her clerk of the wardrobe, to the rectory of Longnewton;[2] but these - the abbey and the bishop - seem to have been the only two direct patrons other than the priory of Durham which were approached by the "indirect patrons."

Although it is fairly certain that many recorded attempts to influence the patrons have not survived or have remained undiscovered, that many others were never recorded, and that both groups might have revealed petitions to several other patrons, it is not altogether surprising that the records which do remain present the picture of indirect patronage set out above. Quite apart from the fact that documentary evidence allows us to know more about the activities of the prior and convent of Durham than about those of any of the other patrons except the bishop and the king, the priory, possessing more patronage in the diocese than anyone but the bishop and being less temporally powerful and therefore more in need of the support of local magnates than the lord palatine, was fairly obviously the most likely patron for the magnates to attempt to influence. Moreover, the priory enjoyed the added advantage of possessing benefices south of /

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[1] F.D.; R.H. f. 156v; R.L. ff. 202v-203; and see above, p. 235.

[2] C.P.L. ii, p. 395.

of the Tees, and in this it outshone even the bishop.

If we allow the fact that the monastic houses, which were largely dependent on the local nobility and gentry to fill the stewardships and bailiwicks of their estates and to support them generally in the protection of their temporal interests, were more likely to comply with the laity's requests for benefices for their clerks than either the bishops of Durham or Carlisle or the local lay patrons, all of whom had their own clerks to provide for and most of whom had no particular reasons for gratifying their neighbours in such matters - if we allow this, then the priory of Durham automatically takes the place of the most important patron to be approached. No other monastic house had so many benefices in its gift as the priory and those others which had the most were in fact the houses of Augustinian and Premonstratensian canons who served most of their cures by members of their convents. Thus the weight of probability tends to support the conclusion that the priory of Durham was the most likely patron to be petitioned for benefices by the sponsors or "good lords" of the job-hunting clergy.

In the 14th century at least, however, there was another source to which these sponsors could apply: namely, the pope. A discussion of papal provisions to Durham dioceses will be found in the second part of the present section;[1] but at this point we must consider not so much the provisions themselves as (where we have the relevant information in the Calendars of Papal Registers - Letters and /

[1] See below, pp. 302-306.

and Petitions) the requests for such provisions which were addressed to the curia by persons other than the candidates themselves. Such requests were sometimes the subject of individual petitions from the sponsors to the pope; while sometimes they were included on a general "roll" of candidates forwarded to Rome or Avignon by a nobleman or a university.[1] They proceeded from a variety of indirect patrons who will be detailed later and nearly all of those recorded in the Calendars are dated between the years 1315 and 1366; only one is dated after the Statute of Praemunire of 1393 the the provision which followed from it was later sanctioned by the king.[2] The majority of the others preceded the 1353 statute.

If we confine ourselves to the main group dated between 1315 and 1366, we find that it consists of 58, which may be divided into three types as follows: (i) 8 asked for canonries and prebends in the collegiate church of Howden in Yorkshire, which were in the gift of the priory of Durham. (ii) 27 merely requested any benefice in the gift of either the bishop or the prior and convent of Durham; 10 required episcopal and 6 priory benefices; the other 11 put it more /

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[1] Cf. Jacob, Petitions for benefices from English universities during the Great Schism (Essays in the Conciliar epoch, 2nd ed., 1953) pp. 224-225.

[2] In 1394 John de Inglewood was surrogated to a claim to the vicarage of Mitford and was provided by the pope on the petition of the Cardinal Priest of St. Cecilia, to whose household Inglewood belonged. In 1407 Henry V pardoned him for accepting the vicarage without royal licence and permitted him to retain possession. (C.P.L. iv, p. 472; C.P.R. 1405-8, p. 348.)

more generally, simply asking for benefices in the gift of "the bishop and church" or "the bishop and prior and convent" of Durham.
(iii) The final group of 23 petitions is perhaps the most interesting, for these petitions specified the benefice in Durham which was required, as follows:-

Table 7

Benefice	Patron	Number of petitions to the Pope for provision
Auckland (canonry and prebend)	Bishop of Durham	6
Lanchester (canonry and prebend)	Bishop of Durham	5
Darlington (canonry and prebend)	Bishop of Durham	1
Norton (canonry and prebend)	Bishop of Durham	1
Bishop Wearmouth (rectory)	Bishop of Durham	1
Gateshead (rectory)	Bishop of Durham	1
Haughton-le-Skerne (rectory)	Bishop of Durham	2
Houghton-le-Spring (rectory)	Bishop of Durham	1
Kirkwhelpington (vicarage)	Bishop of Durham	1
Longnewton (rectory)	Bishop of Durham	1
Bedlington (vicarage)	Priory of Durham	1
Norham (vicarage)	Priory of Durham	1
Kirknewton (vicarage)	Priory of Kirkham	1

The recommendation of clerks to the pope for provision to certain benefices or to benefices in the gift of certain patrons was necessarily a much more impersonal procedure than direct application to the patrons. The sponsor of the clerk needed to have no contact with the patron, was put under no obligation to him, and did not require to have any influence over him. Thus to a certain extent the small corpus of petitions to the pope which has just been described provides for the 14th century period which it covers what is probably a more impartial indication of the relative demand for benefices /

benefices than is given for the early 15th century by the various sources of information on direct petitions to the patrons which have been quoted.

The principal difference between the two periods and the two types of petition lies in the fact that nearly half of the petitions to the pope were for benefices in the gift of the bishop of Durham, while no direct petitions to the bishop have been traced; the main feature which both types and both periods have in common is the large number of petitions for benefices in the gift of the prior and convent. Nevertheless, between 1315 and 1366 the known petitions for benefices in the gift of the bishop outnumber those for priory benefices by 30 to 17. (The twelve requests for benefices in the gift of the "church" of Durham have not been counted.) The conclusion which may be drawn is obvious: namely, that the sponsors - or at any rate those of sufficient status to petition the pope - were asking on behalf of their clerks for the most valuable benefices in the diocese, most of which were in episcopal gift. At the same time the position of the monks of Durham as the second most important patron in the diocese is attested in both groups of petitions; while, in the 15th century direct requests, its position as the most worth while patron to petition in person is made evident.

Of especial interest among the 23 petitions to the pope for specified benefices are the 14 which were applications for canonries and prebends in the collegiate churches; further testimony, that is, to the popularity of such benefices among the higher classes of the clergy. For - let there be no mistake - the majority of these petitions /

petitions were made on behalf of the most important and best qualified clerks by upper class lay and ecclesiastical sponsors - the king, the nobles, the members of the papal curia, the prelates, and the universities. If we arrange the 58 petitions to the pope which we have been considering under these five classes of petitioners, we find, first, that none of them will be left out and, secondly, that well over half of them were made by members of the royal and noble families. To be precise, 18 came from the aristocracy, 17 from the king and other numbers of the royal family, 11 from English ecclesiastical dignitaries - mostly archbishops and bishops - 6 from the English universities - three each from Oxford and Cambridge - and 6 from cardinals and clerks of the papal curia. It should be noted that none of the aristocratic petitions was made by a family whose chief possessions lay in the diocese of Durham or even in the north of England. In this respect these petitions for papal provisions differ from the early 15th century group of direct appeals to the individual patrons, a few of which were sent - usually as we have seen to the priory of Durham - by the local families of Percy and Eure and occasionally even by the local gentry and burgesses. Naturally, also, petitions from the curial clerks were not sent direct to the patrons, and the universities, which had their own system of presenting official lists to the pope, preferred papal provision.

Thus both the 14th century petitioners of the pope and the 15th century petitioners of the patrons were pre-eminently the king, the nobles and the higher clergy; in the last resort it was their power

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and influence which induced both the curia and the local patrons to accede to their requests, and since the supply of ordained clerks in the later middle ages vastly outnumbered the desirable parochial cures, it was usual for a considerable amount of influence to be required to persuade a patron to give up his right to choose an incumbent in order to make way for a stranger. It remains now to consider briefly to what extent the petitioners, sponsors or indirect patrons succeeded in making their influence effective.

So far as we may judge from the evidence at our disposal, the most successful petitions were those which were addressed to the pope and which specified the benefice which was desired. Eighteen of the twenty-three such petitions made between 1315 and 1366 secured actual possession of the benefice for the candidate; that is to say, it is known that eighteen of these candidates held the benefices they had been provided to from sources other than the papal records of the petitions (all of which in the group we are dealing with were endorsed as "granted") or of the letters of provision which usually followed upon the petitions. It is important that the papal records of provision be checked where possible with independent evidence of possession of the benefice, for, as has been pointed out,[1] a provision merely gave to the candidate a legal claim to a benefice, a claim which might well be contested with more or less success by other claimants, for example, by clerks presented by the usual patron, the local bishop or the king.

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[1] Barraclough, op.cit., p. 93.

As might be expected, a petition which merely asked for the provision of a clerk to any benefice in the gift of, say, the bishop of Durham, and which elicited a letter providing the candidate to the next one vacant, was less likely to obtain possession than a request for and a provision to a named benefice. The former type of provision was really similar to the expectative graces granted by the pope to poor priests, whose claim on the papal gift of benefices was based upon their poverty, and lack of connections.[1] The rather vague claims which resulted from them were at a disadvantage when faced with competition from precise presentations to stated benefices. Thus none of the ten papal provisions to unspecified benefices in the gift of the bishop of Durham between 1318 and 1366 was demonstrably effective; and, although the seventeen of the same period which were addressed to the "prior and convent" or the "bishop and church" of Durham might have been honoured by presentation to the priory's benefices south of the Tees, it is fairly certain that none of them led to possession of benefices within the diocese.

Why, then, if the chances of making such provisions effective were uncertain, were they applied for, on the whole, more frequently than provisions to stated benefices? Simply because most of the sponsors who asked for them and most of the clerks on whose behalf they petitioned were not sufficiently well informed about the availability of individual benefices to be able to judge which were the best /

[1] E.g. C.P.P., p. 430.

best ones to apply for. Usually it took a certain amount of local knowledge to be aware of the fact that a particular incumbent was old or ailing and that his benefice was therefore likely to be soon on the market. Moreover the delays involved in petitioning Rome or Avignon might well mean that the chosen benefice had been filled long before the papal provision came through,[1] unless the petitioner had very accurate advance information to work on, which again was unlikely, if he were not of local stock or did not have local connections. As we have already seen that few of those who petitioned the pope for benefices for their clerks came within these categories it is not surprising that most were content merely to ask for any benefice of a certain value, specifying only the patron, who would no doubt be chosen on the criterion of the value, nature and location of his benefices.

When we turn to petitions for benefices addressed by the sponsors directly to the patrons we find confirmation of the division between the local and extra-diocesan sponsors, the former tending to ask for named benefices, the latter recommending their clerk for "a benefice" in the gift of - usually - the prior and convent of Durham. For example, Henry Percy, earl of Northumberland, recommended Sir John of Wearmouth, the countess's chaplain, to Prior Wessington for presentation to the vicarage of Billingham,[2] and John /

[1] It frequently happened, however, that a petition for one benefice resulted in the issue of a letter of provision to another, although I have found no example of this within the group of Durham churches. (Cf. Jacob, op.cit., p. 224.)

[2] Loc. xxv, nos. 144, 159.

John Brownflete of Wearmouth supported his friend Robert Jacson in sponsoring Thomas March for the vicarage of Dalton-le-Dale.[1] In the same period, however, the king, the queen, the countess of Kent, the constable, the archbishop of York and the bishop of Lincoln submitted the names of their clerks to the prior for presentation to the "next vacant benefice" in the gift of the priory.[2] None of these clerks, so far as can be traced, achieved possession of any benefice in the diocese of Durham.

If there was no particular advantage to be gained by speedy action, a petition to the pope and the resultant provision was probably the most effective means of bringing pressure to bear upon a local patron. For while the request of a sponsor addressed to the patron was a purely private affair and laid the patron under no official obligation whatsoever to pay any attention to it, far less comply with it; a papal provision carried with it the full weight of ecclesiastical authority, and although it did not, as we have seen, override other presentations, it at least gave the candidate on whose behalf it was issued a legal claim to the benefice. Moreover, attempts by outsiders to influence patrons in the exercise of their rights of patronage were in essence irregular - even illegal if pressure was brought to bear or bribery attempted. Although, of course, openly enough pursued during our period, such attempts savoured a little of the pacta or transactiones against which the canon /

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[1] Ibid., no. 24.

[2] Ibid., nos. 91, 166, 95, 98, 106, 105, 111, 50, 83.

canon law never ceased to fulminate.[1] On the other hand nothing could be more official than a papal provision, the application for and issue of which were everyday occurrences in the routine of ecclesiastical administration.

It is not improbable, however, that the petition couched in general terms - that is to say merely indicating the nature and value of the benefice - increased in fashion over the more specific request for a named benefice. The growing practice of submitting collected petitions in roll form by universities, kings and nobles would naturally foster such a trend, and for a clerk to have his name entered upon such a roll at - and this is important - as early a stage in his career as possible, was a method of bringing himself forward for consideration,[2] even if there was no immediate prospect of his receiving preferment. The later middle ages, after all, was the period of the "good lord" and the indentured retinue, when the way to get on was to establish a connection with a person or institution which had influence. For the purpose of fixing a clerk's "connections" in the records of the curia a place on an official roll was probably more effective than an isolated recommendation even if the latter was successful.

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[1] From English sources see the Council of Oxford's declaration in 1222 that no benefice is to be vacated sub pactis. (Wilkins, Concilia, i, p. 587), and Lyndwood, Provinciale, p. 74. When the burghers of Berwick successfully petitioned the monks of Durham to present John de Ederam to the vicarage of Berwick they were careful to note that they had no legal claim to the presentation "lest it seem that they sold the presentation to us." (M.C. 5983.)

[2] Cf. Jacob, loc.cit.

It is possible, too, that the standardisation of petitions in the rolls and the resultant diminution in individual and specific petitions may help to explain the dwindling number of those papal provisions to Durham benefices during the 14th century which state that they are issued in response to a particular request. The last such provision (it was, in fact, a surrogation) which has been discovered is dated 1394.[1] There was, indeed, a limited number of papal provisions to Durham benefices during the 15th century,[2] but, in the records which remain, no petition by a third party is mentioned.

The most obvious explanation for the lack of 15th century individual petitions to the pope, however, is the series of statutes of Provisors and Praemunire which characterised the relations of the English parliament and the church during the latter half of the 14th century.[3] The success of these statutes in controlling and discouraging appeals to Rome for benefices, the pursuit of claims at the Roman curia, and finally the entry of certain papal letters and directives into England, has been the subject of considerable discussion among historians of the present century.[4] Waugh's opinion /

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1 In 1394 the pope surrogated John de Inglewood to John de Skendelby's claim to the vicarage of Mitford. It is doubtful whether Inglewood obtained possession. (See below, vol. 2, under Mitford.)

2 See below, p. 304.

3 Statutes of Provisors 1351 and 1390, of Praemunire 1353, 1365 and 1393. (25 Edward III, 4; 27 Edward III, 1, cap. i; 38 Edward III, 2; 13 Richard II, 2, caps. ii-iii; 16 Richard II, cap. iv. Statutes of the Realm, i, pp. 316-8; 329-31; 385-6; ii, pp. 69-71; 84-86.)

4 See, for example, W. T. Waugh's famous article: The great Statute of /

opinion in 1922 on the 1393 Statute of Praemunire was that its value lay chiefly in the possibilities it provided for simpler and more effective action against appeals to Rome; while "as long as any respect was shown for the wording of the statute, it gave the temporal authorities few powers that they would not have possessed without it."[1] Miss Davies's recent article (1953) tends to show that the 1351 Statute of Provisors was not fully utilised by King Edward III since his policy in the later years of his reign was one of co-operation with the papacy - a policy which culminated in the concordat of 1377.[2]

It is not possible from the evidence at our disposal to relate the fluctuations in the numbers of petitions for and provisions to benefices in the diocese of Durham directly to the legislation on provisors and praemunire. Nevertheless, as a contribution to the statistics which it may someday be possible to compile on a national scale for correlation with the statute, such relevant figures as we have for Durham are perhaps worth recording.[3]

Between the years 1312 and 1394 there were 45 petitions for stated benefices in the diocese of Durham or for unspecified benefices in the gift of the bishop or priory, 17 of which were dated prior /

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of Praemunire (E.H.R. xxxvii, pp. 173-205), and, most recently, Cecily Davies, The Statute of Provisors of 1351 (History, N.S. xxxix, no. 133, pp. 116-133), and sources quoted therein.

1 Waugh, op.cit., p. 204.

2 Davies, op.cit., p. 132.

3 Provisions to benefices in the diocese of Hereford have already been examined by J. T. Driver partly with a view to assessing the effectiveness of the earlier statutes. (Driver, The papacy and the diocese of Hereford, 1307-1377 (Church Quarterly Review, cxlv, 1947, pp. 31-47).)

prior to the issue of the first Statute of Provisors in 1351, and 28 between that date and 1394 - one year after the issue of the "Great Statute of Praemunire" of 1393.[1] Of these 45 petitions, however, only 18 resulted in a successful papal provision to a Durham benefice, 11 dated before 1351 and 7 afterwards.

But these figures of petitions and provisions do not tell the whole story of the pressure on the papacy during the later middle ages for Durham benefices. It will be recalled that we are dealing in this section only with petitions made on behalf of clergy by a third party; the more general treatment of papal provisions as distinct for petitions for them will thus follow in the next section. Nevertheless, it seems as well to complete at this point the discussion of the possible effects of the Statutes of Provisors and Praemunire; so for this purpose it is proposed to anticipate somewhat by recording here the full statistics of provisions and of petitions, including not only those of third parties, but also those made by the candidates themselves.

There are, indeed, only five of the latter definitely recorded, two dated before 1351 and three after, the last in 1363. Thus these do /

[1] A reference is due at this point to the caveat entered by Mr. Watt upon the frequent unreliability of the dating of many of the papal letters in the classes we are dealing with, petitions, for instance, being sometimes antedated in order to establish an earlier claim. (D. E. R. Watt, Sources for Scottish history of the fourteenth century in the archives of the Vatican (Scottish Historical Review, xxxii, 1953, pp. 101-122).) Although it was not possible to investigate in detail all the letters on which the above statistics are based, it is unlikely that inaccuracies in the dating of some of them would radically alter the conclusions we are basing upon these figures.

do not appreciably change the figures for petitions already given. But there were considerably more than the 18 successful provisions quoted above. For the whole of our period 70 papal provisions to benefices in the diocese of Durham have been traced, 57 of which were successful, and 18 of which, as we have seen, the result of known petitions. 24 of these provisions were dated prior to 1351, 17 of which were successful; 34 were dated between 1351 and 1393 (30 successful); 12 were dated between 1393 and 1504 (10 successful); there were none after 1504.[1]

Our total available figures, therefore, show that the number of provisions - so far from sharply declining after 1351, as was indicated by the numbers of provisions in response to known petitions by third parties - increased in roughly the same proportion as did the total of petitions:- 24 and 34 (provisions) as against 17 and 28 (petitions) for the periods 1312 to 1351 and 1352 to 1394 respectively. There were, moreover, actually fewer unsuccessful provisions after 1351 than before. From these figures, therefore, we /

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[1] The above figures of provisions have been calculated mainly from the Calendars of Papal Letters and the extant bishops' registers. Unfortunately the large gaps in the latter series of records make it impossible for us to be strict about checking whether or not provisions, which were dated during them, actually took effect. Thus to have regarded as unsuccessful every provision for which we cannot produce evidence of institution and induction would have produced a ludicrously low figure of successful provisions to Durham benefices and, in preparing the Fasti in volume 2, would undoubtedly have led to the omission of the names of many clerks who actually held benefices. Usually, therefore, a provision to a stated benefice has been accepted as leading to possession unless there is either definite evidence to the contrary or evidence of a conflicting claim.

we are forced to conclude that the Statutes of Provisors and Praemunire of 1351 and 1353 had simply no success at all in preventing papal provisions to Durham benefices. After the 1390 and 1393 acts, however, the stream of petitions dried up completely; while that of provisions was reduced to a trickle.

Mr. Driver, in his study of papal influence in the diocese of Hereford between 1307 and 1377, reached the conclusion that "... the majority of papal mandates were issued during the years 1327-69."[1] The evidence for the diocese of Durham is in complete agreement. If, on the other hand, the efficacy of the papal letters of provision does not seem to have been interfered with in Durham as it was in Hereford by reason of the 1351 Statute of Provisors, the difference may perhaps be a further result of the peculiar conditions of ecclesiastical patronage in the northern diocese, where by the end of our period only 15 out of 115 parish churches were in the gift of laymen. In Hereford, over 100 parish churches were in lay gift, and, as we know, the papacy in issuing provisions, was careful not to infringe the advowson rights of the laity.[2]

It would be rash indeed, however, to conclude without a very searching analysis of the evidence for all the dioceses of England, that the preponderance of ecclesiastical patronage in Durham led to a figure for papal provisions relatively higher than that for the rest of the English Church. The proportion of inductions to Durham benefices which resulted from papal provisions over the whole of our period was merely 2.4 per cent. For while few Durham benefices were /

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[1] Driver, op. cit., p. 41.
[2] Ibid., and, as there cited, Barraclough, op.cit., pp. 43-44.

were protected from papal provisions because they were in lay patronage, the considerable patronage - both direct and indirect - which was exercised by the king and the bishop of Durham provided strong competition for the papal candidates. Frequently the claims of applicants who had the support of the king or the bishop superseded those who had been provided by the pope.[1] Moreover, between 1311 and 1540, while 166 appointments to benefices in the diocese of Durham went to candidates who were described as "king's clerks" (usually royal administrative officials), and exactly the same number to "bishop's clerks" (chaplains and officials of the bishop of Durham); only 33 went to "papal clerks" (officials of the pope, the curia, or the cardinals). Admittedly these figures include only the incumbents whose "connections" or official positions are indicated in the presentation records or the Fasti Dunelmenses and perhaps could all be slightly increased. But their proportions provide a further indication of the distribution of "influence" in Durham patronage. It may be added that only 15 appointments to benefices were made in favour of clerks who have been definitely identified as dependants or officials of the magnates, and only 27 in favour of clergymen who were stated to be relatives of the nobles.

(ii) Occasional patronage.

The second type of interference with the normal exercise of patronage was the result of direct presentations which were on certain /

[1] E.g. R.P.D. i, pp. 215-217; C.P.P. i, p. 185; R.H. ff. 31v-32v; C.P.R. 1348-50, p. 470.

certain occasions made to benefices by persons or institutions other than the legal patrons. At least 14 such "occasional" patrons are on record as having presented to benefices in the diocese of Durham on one or more occasions during our period.

Eight of them were "patrons for a turn" who presented on one occasion only - usually in the 16th century and usually to benefices which were in the gift of monastic houses. These presentations have already been discussed in the first part of the present chapter under the sections on the patronage of the monasteries,[1] and need not detain us now; they were usually made by members of the local gentry.

For administrative reasons, two prelates, the archbishop of York and the bishop of Durham, made isolated collations to benefices not normally in their gift. Thus during the vacancy in the bishopric of Durham following Anthony Bek's death in 1311, Archbishop Greenfield collated Henry de Herdslawe to the vicarage of Chatton,[2] and William de Wirkeshale to that of Hartburn.[3] The collation to Chatton seems to have been allowed to pass unchallenged; but William de Wirkeshale's tenure of Hartburn was abruptly terminated a year after his collation, when the king, claiming that the right of presentation to episcopal benefices sede vacante belonged to him and that he had already presented Master John de Percy, cited Wirkeshale /

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[1] See above, pp. 208-9, 211-2, 259.
[2] F.D.
[3] R.P.D. i, pp. 73, 282-3.

hale before a royal court and, on its findings, ordered his removal and the admission of Percy; Bishop Kellawe complied.[1] No further details of this particular case are available, but it would appear that the archbishop had attempted to treat the bishop's advowsons of vicarages, the rectories of which were appropriated to monastic houses, as purely religious matters of ecclesiastical administration which devolved, the bishopric being vacant, upon the metropolitan. And he had a good case, for, as we have seen, the bishop, in retaining these advowsons in his own hands, usually did so in order to ensure the due functioning of the cure of souls and the fair treatment of the vicar,[2] and was thus acting purely in his ecclesiastical capacity. The king, on the other hand, chose to class them with the rectories to which the bishop presented as part of the feudal privileges attached to his palatine estates, and therefore as pertaining during vacancies to the crown. On whichever side abstract right lay, however, the king's law triumphed over the church's; and there are no further instances of the archbishop's making sede vacante collations.

The other local prelate who occasionally presented to benefices which were not normally in his gift was the bishop of Durham himself. On two occasions he clearly did so in his position as lord palatine, the feudal superior who had the custody of the estates of the true patron during his minority. In this way John de Hothwayt was collated /

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[1] Ibid., pp. 282-3, 286-8.
[2] See above, pp. 189-190.

collated to the sinecure rectory of Middleton St. George in 1339 during the minority of Roland Baart,[1] and in 1498, during the minority of the heir of the earl of Westmorland, Edward Strangwysh received the rectory of Brancepeth.[2] An 18th century list of vicars of Norham tells us that about 1380 Bishop Hatfield presented one John Albion to the vicarage, which was in the gift of the prior and convent of Durham, ostensibly because the office of prior was vacant.[3] But there is no contemporary evidence of this presentation and certainly none that Albion actually held the benefice. Moreover there had not been a vacancy in the priory since Robert de Berrington succeeded John Fossour in 1374. It seems fairly certain, therefore, that this presentation did not take effect, and no other instance is recorded of episcopal attempts to fill the monastery's benefices during vacancies in the priorate. Both as the feudal superior in the palatinate, however, and as technically the head of the monastic chapter, the bishop had grounds for claiming such presentations.

The most inexplicable of all the "occasional" presentations was made in 1488, under which year in the Register of the priory and convent of Durham we find an entry to the effect that the monks had presented one John Gray to the vicarage of Kirknewton, a benefice which was normally in the gift of the Augustinian priory of Kirkham /

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1 R.P.D. iii, pp. 228-9.
2 S.S. cxlvii, p. 76.
3 Randall MSS. x, p. 210.

Kirkham in Yorkshire. Although we have no direct confirmatory evidence that Gray actually took possession, his claim does not appear to have been challenged by any other candidate, whether presented by the legal patron or by anyone else, and the Fasti Dunelmenses notes him as incumbent in 1492 as well as in 1488. Thus there is more than an even chance that his presentation was effective. The entry in the register gives no reason why this single presentation should have been made by the monks of Durham rather than the canons of Kirkham. The occasion may be noted, however, as the only known one on which the prior and convent presented to a benefice which was not normally in their gift.

So far we have been dealing with the small fry among the occasional patrons, the local prelates and gentry. But their presentations, interesting enough in themselves, fade into insignificance beside those of the two most persistent and most frequent exercisers of this form of patronage, the pope and the king. Papal provisions and royal presentations to episcopal and some monastic benefices sede vacante and to benefices in the gift of lay tenants in chief during minorities - these were the principal forms of occasional presentation during our period. The figures which may be derived from the calendars of Papal Letters and of royal Letters Patent and from the extant episcopal registers show that 70 papal provisions were made to Durham diocesan benefices between 1311 and 1540, 57 of which probably took effect.[1] In the same period there were /

[1] See above, p. 296, note 1, for the principles upon which the effectiveness of provisions has been estimated.

Table 8

Regular patrons.		Papal provisions.				Royal presentations.			
		Number of provisions	Percentage of total	Number successful	Percentage of total	Number of presentations	Percentage of total	Number successful	Percentage of total
Bishop of Durham	Benefices with cure	20	29%	14	24%	46	43%	37	43%
	Canonries and prebends	40	57%	34	60%	24	23%	21	25%
Other ecclesiastical patrons		9	13%	8	14%	19	18%	11	13%
Lay patrons		1	1%	1	2%	17	16%	16	19%
	Totals	70	100%	57	100%	106	100%	85	100%

were 106 royal presentations, 85 of which were successful.

Needless to say, nearly all of these provisions and presentations were made to the wealthier and topographically more attractive benefices of county Durham. Moreover, the majority were made to benefices in the gift of the bishop of Durham himself; while most of the papal provisions recommended their candidates for the canonries and prebends of the collegiate churches which did not entail the legal obligation of permanent residence. Both the pope - as we might expect - and the king - for reasons slightly less obvious - made comparatively few attempts to intrude their candidates into benefices in lay gift.[1] Only one papal provision to a Durham benefice in the gift of a layman has been traced during our period, and since the previous incumbent had died in Rome, the pope was legally correct.[2] This lack of papal provisions to the churches of the laity in no way distinguished the diocese of Durham from the rest of England. On the other hand most of the royal occasional presentations were made to benefices in ecclesiastical gift simply because a large number of benefices in the diocese were held by the bishop as lord palatine. Table 8 which precedes is perhaps the simplest way of /

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[1] "It is true, and must be emphasized, that the pope did not normally interfere with livings in lay patronage ... The principles of equity, which nowhere received such lasting recognition as in the law of the Church, made special consideration of the rights of lay patrons not only a political expedient but also a moral obligation." (Barraclough, op.cit., pp. 43-44.)

[2] In 1450, on the death of Emeric Burrell at the curia, Eugenius IV provided his nephew, Francis Condulmier, bishop of Porto, to the rectory of Ford which was at that time in the gift of the Heron family. (F.D.; N.C.H. xi, p. 349.)

of indicating the distribution of the papal provisions and royal presentations.

Most papal provisions and most royal presentations were clearly made to benefices in the gift of the bishop, especially - in the case of provisions - to the canonries and prebends. It is to papal provisions, however, that we must look for the more reliable indication of the relative popularity of the benefices with the clergy and the occasional patrons. For while papal provision was the result of a conscious choice - at least of a type of benefice - by the candidate, his sponsor or the curia, royal presentation was more often a fortuitous affair, depending on which benefices fell vacant sede vacante or during minorities. It should be remembered also that the "other ecclesiastical patrons" of the table include the bishop of Carlisle to whose benefices, sede vacante, the king was also entitled to present. Seven of the nineteen presentations in column 5 and four of the eleven which were successful in column 7 were the result of vacancies in the see of Carlisle. The others represent presentations to benefices in the gift of monastic houses usually during vacancies in the priorate or abbacy.

By the end of the 14th century the numbers of both papal provisions and royal presentations to Durham benefices were rapidly diminishing. Between 1351 and 1380, during Hatfield's episcopate, 25 successful provisions are recorded and 19 royal presentations; but under Bishop Langley, between 1407 and 1436, the equivalent figures are only 3 and 6. While the decline in the number of papal provisions /

provisions is what might be expected if the Statutes of Provisors and Praemunire were effectively applied,[1] it is less easy to explain the sharp drop in the figures for royal presentations, even if this drop was less than is suggested by the evidence available. Much of it may have been due to the fact, pointed out by Professor Tout, that from the 14th century onwards laymen were gradually replacing the clergy in many government departments, so that the number of the king's clerks may itself have been on the decline.[2] Moreover, before the king could exercise occasional patronage he usually had to wait for vacancies which occurred sede vacante or during the minorities of tenants in chief, and there is no evidence that the crown ever interfered with lay patronage other than on the accepted occasions during minorities. There is much, however, to show that in the 14th century the king was presenting sede vacante to benefices in the gift of the bishop of Durham, long after the expiry of the vacancy in question, and even after the tenures of intervening incumbents.[3] In the 15th century, on the other hand, seven out of the ten royal presentations known to have been made to benefices in the gift of the bishop of Durham were made /

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1 The possible effects on papal provisions of such legislation has already been discussed. (See above, pp. 293-298.)

2 Tout, Chapters, iii, p. 281; iv, pp. 159-160.

3 E.g. Mag.Rep.Pont., 3a 12e, 4; C.P.R. 1317-21, p. 216; 1327-30, p. 188; 1385-9, p. 460. In fact the king no longer consented to be bound by the canon law that the right of presentation lapsed to the ordinary if the proper patron did not present within six months or if there was a dispute about the advowson which was not settled within the same time. Moreover he was extending his exemption from the rule of lapse to cover his right to present to benefices sede vacante. As Miss Deeley puts it, "the legal dictum that 'no time runs against the king' ... was now applied to his rights of patronage." (Deeley, Papal provision and royal rights of patronage in the early fourteenth century (E.H.R. xliii, 1928) pp. 512-513.)

made during periods of vacancies in the see. Once more, the evidence is too incomplete to justify dogmatism; but there is at least a prima facie case for assuming that in the 15th century a tighter control was exercised by the bishop over his rights of presentation than at an earlier period, and that Miss Gladys Hinde's statement, "in Bishop Tunstall's time advowsons were a jealously guarded form of property,"[1] was no less applicable to the century of Bishops Langley and Neville.

Part 4. Conclusions on patronage.

Patronage may be divided into two principal categories: direct patronage exercised by the legal patron on the one hand, and, on the other, occasional and indirect patronage exercised respectively by a third party in place of the true patron and by the true patron at the behest of a third party.

The examination of occasional and indirect patronage in part three showed primarily that it was of considerably limited application; usually during our period (and if anything to an increasing extent) patronage was exercised by the duly constituted patrons and - so far as the admittedly scanty records show - without much pressure from other parties, lay or ecclesiastical. Figures to illustrate this examination have already been presented, and at this point it is /

[1] S.S. clxi, introd., p. xix.

is only necessary to sum up the matter as follows:-

Table 9

Diocese of Durham 1311-1540

Total number of known presentations (calculated from total number of incumbents in vol. 2):	2404
Number of presentations documented (i.e. presentations recorded and/or dated in extant documents or lists):	1567
Number of successful presentations known to have been made or inspired by persons other than the normal patron:	159
Percentage of total presentations for which the patrons are known not to have been directly responsible:	7%
Percentage of documented presentations for which the patrons are known not to have been directly responsible:	10%

Thus it appears that ninety per cent or more of presentations were made by the proper patrons on their own initiative. Undoubtedly this is the most important fact to bear in mind when considering the influence of papal provisions and royal and other lay interference with appointments to benefices in the diocese of Durham. A good deal of thought has been given to the elucidation of the problem of patronage in determining the composition and conduct of the late mediaeval church. Professor Barraclough's monograph on papal provisions, based primarily upon German and Netherlands evidence, has drawn attention to the importance of lay influence as opposed to papal provisions in forming the social structure of the upper /

upper strata of ecclesiastical society and with it much of that condition of the church which some at least of the 16th century reformers set out to reform.[1] Those sections of the church in the diocese of Durham with which we are dealing seem to have been much less disturbed either by the pope or the laity than were the European benefices discussed by Professor Barraclough, and even less, it seems likely, than those in the more accessible parts of England. In Durham, of course, there were none of those wealthy and well-appointed cathedral chapters which bespattered the Rhineland with positions and fat salaries ready to be requisitioned by the local nobility for the maintenance of their dependent clerks and relatives; the nearest approach (the cathedral chapter of Durham being monastic) was provided by the collegiate churches, and to the canonries and prebends of these churches, as we have seen, many of the important clerks who held benefices in the diocese were sooner or later appointed. The lack of a really large number of valuable benefices which could be held without the commitments involved in the cure of souls may be advanced as one of the chief reasons why the legitimate patrons of the diocese of Durham were left roughly speaking ninety per cent undisturbed in the exercise of their rights.

Parts one and two of the present chapter having shown conclusively that the vast majority of the Durham benefices were in the gift of the clergy, and part three having added the information that the /

[1] Barraclough, Papal provisions, pp. 64-65.

the patrons were not unruly troubled by lay or papal interference or influence, it follows that church patronage in the diocese of Durham was mainly exercised by local people - the bishop, the archdeacons and a few of the nobles and gentry - and by local ecclesiastical corporations - the monasteries and hospitals. The pattern which we have already observed in secular politics during the later middle ages[1] thus had to some extent an analogy in church patronage - in itself an important aspect of ecclesiastical politics. The greater magnates concentrated for the most part on having their clerks appointed to benefices in their own or someone else's gift in parts of England to the south of the palatinate, at the same time as their political interests were shifting to the south and focussing upon the royal court. In the bishopric, therefore, local lay patronage as well as local government was left in the hands of the lesser nobility and gentry, who also acquired, usually from monastic patrons, those single turns of patronage which were a feature of the immediate pre-Reformation period.

But the most important factor which determined the nature of Durham /

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[1] See above, pp. 82-83.

Durham patronage had been in the making for over two centuries before 1300 and was completed during the first century of our period: namely the transfer of advowsons from the laity to the church and, as a corollary, the large numbers of appropriations. For most of our period members of the local clergy were responsible for over eighty per cent of local presentations. The tenacity with which the bishopric of Durham clung to Roman Catholicism in the 16th century probably owes not a little to the predominance of the bishop and chapter of Durham as patrons of benefices combined with the fact that Bishop Tunstall was an exceedingly unenthusiastic reformer, whose own chaplain, Richard Hildyard, had to flee to Scotland on account of his opposition to the dissolution of the monasteries.[1]

[1] Letters and Papers of Henry VIII, xv, pp.12-13.

C H A P T E R F I V E

THE CLERGY

Part 1. The social structure of the clergy.

The purpose of the first part of this chapter is to analyse as far as is possible the social, educational and professional background of the clergy who occupied the parochial benefices and the prebends in the diocese of Durham; while the second part will attempt to describe the nature and quality of their work.

As in chapter 4, the argument is necessarily based largely upon statistical evidence, and, again as in chapter 4, this evidence is mainly derived from the episcopal registers supplemented by the registers, letter-books and files of the prior and convent of Durham and the royal and papal records of presentations and provisions contained in the calendars of Patent Rolls and of Papal Letters and Petitions. The method, broadly speaking, has been to calculate the total ascertainable number of institutions to the benefices under consideration over the entire period, 1311 to 1540, and over selected terms within that period; and then to discover what proportion of these institutions went to certain defined classes of clergy: foreigners, local men, relatives of the nobility and squirearchy, clerks of the papal, episcopal, royal and aristocratic administrations, university graduates and scholars. The same process has been followed for the institutions to certain groups of benefices arranged according to their patrons: churches in the gift of the bishop of Durham, the priory of Durham, the bishop of Carlisle, the houses of canons regular, the king, and other /

other lay patrons. Within the limits imposed, it is thus hoped to reach some conclusions about the nature of the clergy in relation to the nature of their benefices and patrons during the two centuries preceding the dissolution of the monasteries.[1]

The total number of institutions to the benefices we are considering was 2,404 over the period 1311-1540.[2] That is to say that during this period the records which have been indicated make some mention of 2,404 separate terms of incumbency; not, it must be remembered, 2,404 separate clergymen. A few of the clergy were pluralists, holding more than one benefice at the same time; while many more held in the course of their careers several different benefices at different times. In short, the number of incumbencies considerably exceeds the number of incumbents. 471 of these incumbencies were in the canonries and prebends of the collegiate churches - benefices without cure of souls. Of the remaining 1,933, which were in parish churches, it may be calculated from volume 2 of this thesis that 1,488 were the result of institutions which brought the recipient his only or his first such benefice in the diocese of Durham. The other 445 institutions installed clerks who already possessed or had possessed one or more other benefices in the diocese. In other words, 1,488 clerks held parish churches during our period, and while each of them held at least /

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[1] The evidence presented will not take separate account of the occasional and indirect presentations described in chapter 4, which were there shown to be a very small proportion of the total.

[2] The incumbents appointed as a result of these institutions are listed under their benefices in volume 2, below.

least one such benefice, some of them held others in sufficient numbers to reach a total of 445. Also from the lists in volume 2 it may be calculated that these 445 institutions were distributed among 329 clerks, of whom 250 held only two benefices in the diocese; while the other 79 between them accounted for 274 benefices in all, some occupying three, while a few - usually episcopal or royal clerks - might easily hold half a dozen, some occasionally in plurality, and others consecutively, but often in the course of a very few years.[1]

In the figures which follow, therefore, the same clergyman may be counted twice or more, depending on the number of benefices to which he was successfully presented and instituted. This splitting of the personalities should not unduly mislead, provided that it is kept in mind. It is, of course, inevitable in any attempt to compare the proportions of the classes of incumbents in certain types of benefices, since many clerks held more than one type. For example, Edward III's keeper of the great seal, David de Wolloure, held the rectories of Knaresdale and Bishop Wearmouth, which were in the gift of the king and the bishop of Durham respectively,[2] and therefore /

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[1] For example, see below, vol. 2, Deanery of Auckland, under Richard de Barnard Castle and Hugh de Westwick.

These figures are of some importance in estimating the extent of pluralism and the exchange of benefices in the diocese. (See below, pp. 412-442.) The somewhat cumbrous calculations necessary to obtain them have not been repeated for the incumbents of the canonries and prebends; such benefices changed hands more frequently than the parish churches, and pluralism was more frequent and of less significance.

[2] See below, vol. 2, Bishop Wearmouth and Knaresdale, under Wolloure.

therefore is included in the sum of royal clerks under both benefices. Although the difficulty does not arise in the calculations which cover all the benefices in the diocese, it was considered desirable for purposes of comparison that these should be made on the same principle as the others which deal with the smaller groups. The unit of assessment is therefore always the institution, or, in other words, the successful presentation or collation.

The incumbents have been classified under three fairly general headings: provenance, education and connections. The first of these explains itself: under it the clergy will be grouped according to where they came from; under the second the primary purpose will be to assess the academic qualifications of the incumbents; while the third heading - perhaps the least precise - will cover the grouping of the clergy according to their standing with potential patrons, direct or indirect, based usually on their relationship as acquaintances, clients, servants or relatives.

(i) The provenance of the clergy.

In the present section, the primary object is to discover what proportion of the institutions to Durham benefices went to local men. The term, local, however, is not applied only to the natives of Northumberland and Durham, for it is arguable that the type of northern Englishman embraced also the inhabitants of the western counties of Cumberland, Westmorland and Lancashire, and indeed of parts of Yorkshire. The social and political unity of the "north" as including /

including England north of the Trent was recognised in Tudor times by the fact that this was the area assigned to the jurisdiction of Henry VIII's Council of the North; while for two centuries earlier the wide interests of the family of Percy had helped to link Yorkshire with the northern border counties. Edward III's establishment of the offices of government at York in 1332 during his Scottish campaigns effectively recognised the city as the capital of the north, and made it for five years the administrative capital of England itself.[1] Thus, in terms of ecclesiastical geography, local clerks may be taken to mean those domiciled in the province of York. In several important respects these clerks form a class of incumbents in the diocese of Durham separate from that to which the southern English and foreign clergy belong.

First, the local clerks were in a considerable majority as incumbents of Durham benefices; while most of them, unlike a large number of clerks from the south, were permanently resident in their parishes. It was, on the whole, the local clerks who received most of the patronage of the local patrons, both lay and ecclesiastical, except for that of the bishop of Durham. On the other hand the /

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[1] Tout, Chapters, iii, pp. 56-61. In many aspects of mediaeval English life the division of the country at the River Trent is apparent. In law, for example, two escheators were appointed, one for the country to the north of the river, one for that to the south. (A. L. Poole, From Domesday Book to Magna Carta (Oxford Hist. of England, iii) p. 417, note 4.) At the University of Cambridge in 1261 formidable riots resulted from an outburst of ill-feeling between northerners and southerners. (Venn, Alumni Cantabrigienses, i, preface, p. xi.)

the local clergy were no more than the southerners and the foreigners hemmed within an impenetrable class barrier; an appreciable number of them went to the southern universities and, if they graduated, inserted themselves into the academic class of incumbents, often too into that of the administrative clergy.[1] This is to say nothing of the unknown quantity of clerks who may have attended at a university for a year or two but who returned home without graduating, and, in the absence of early matriculation records, are distinguishable only by the fragmentary survival of episcopal licences of absence to attend the schools.[2] These students, although possibly enriched in qualifications, were not set apart in status from the mass of local and non-academic clergy, who may be regarded for our purposes as a distinct group.

In preparing table 10 which follows, the principal evidence for establishing the locality to which each clerk belonged has been twofold: first the definite statements in many letters of presentation and institution, papal provision and royal nomination, that the clerk in question is "of the diocese of N," and secondly - especially for the earlier part of our period - the surnames of the incumbents /

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[1] For example, the two deans of Auckland, William de Walworth, Bachelor of Civil Law, probably a native of Walworth, near Heighington in County Durham, and William Doncaster, LL.B., a native of Yorkshire, who was in 1432 an Official of Bishop Langley. (See below, vol. 2, Deanery of Auckland, under Walworth and Doncaster.)

[2] Cf. below, pp. 340-341.

incumbents themselves. When surnames came to be family inheritances rather than terms descriptive of origin or employment, these names lose much of their value as evidence - certainly as precise evidence - of places of origin. Nevertheless, for the 14th century at any rate, they remain as useful [illegible] indications of provenance, and as such they have been used. It should be noted that without exception, the clerks ennumerated as "foreign", came from France, the Low Countries, Italy or Spain. The first line lists the total number of institutions known over the period 1311 to 1540, the second, the number of these institutions whose recipients it has been possible to "place" on the evidence indicated above. It is against this latter figure that the percentages have been calculated.

Table 10

Provenance of beneficed clergy, 1311-1540

(a) With cure of souls.

Total institutions		1,933	
Number of institutions to clerks of known provenance		1,267	
Number of these clerks who came from:-	diocese of Durham	509	40.2% (of 1,267)
" "	diocese of Carlisle	80	6.3% "
" "	diocese of York	393	31.0% "

Number of these clerks who came from:-	other English dioceses	208	16.4%	(of 1,267)
" "	Scotland	18	1.4%	"
" "	Ireland	12	1.0%	"
" "	Europe	47	3.7%	"

(b) Without cure of souls (i.e. canons of collegiate churches).

Total institutions		471		
Number of institutions to clerks of known provenance		326		
Number of these clerks who came from:-	diocese of Durham	71	21.8%	(of 326)
" "	diocese of Carlisle	13	4.0%	"
" "	diocese of York	97	29.7%	"
" "	other English dioceses	117	35.9%	"
" "	Scotland	-	-	
" "	Ireland	2	0.6%	"
" "	Europe	26	8.0%	"

It is important to note the possible margin of error in these figures. Only about two thirds of the total of known institutions went to clerks whose home district is ascertainable; but this total, depending as it does so much upon the imperfect runs of episcopal registers, is itself a far from complete record of all beneficed clerks /

clerks within our period. We must bear in mind, therefore, that the inclusion in the preceding survey of information now no longer available could considerably alter the percentages obtained. But although this possibility exists, it is on the whole unlikely, and the figures arrived at do not contradict but rather confirm such conclusions about the general nature of patronage and the composition of the clergy as have been reached elsewhere in this thesis. Thus the political "separateness" of the north of England[1] and the predominance of local patrons[2] receives corroboration from the preponderance of local men among the clergy; while the popularity of the collegiate church prebends with the lawyers and administrators, many of whom were not of local stock, is borne out by the larger proportion of non-local clerks in table 10b.

The preponderance of local clergy, especially in the parochial cures, is the most important, as it is the most obvious, of the lessons to be learned from the table. The fact that three quarters of the rectors and vicars were from the north of England - two fifths from the diocese itself - is the final answer, so far as the diocese of Durham is concerned, to criticisms that a corrupt and misdirected system of appointments to benefices was depriving the parishioners of the ministrations of clergymen who knew and shared their needs and experiences.[3] Such criticisms usually proceed /

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[1] See above, pp. 56-59.

[2] See above, table 2, p. 173; table 6, between pp. 252 and 253.

[3] The importance attached by both contemporaries and later writers to the appointment of foreigners to English benefices may be observed /

proceed to attack the system of papal provisions for intruding large numbers of foreign clergy into English benefices, and once again it is necessary to point out that for the diocese of Durham this is simply not true. Chapter 4 showed how very small was the number of papal provisions to Durham benefices; and now this table tells us that only 6.1 per cent of the institutions - on papal provision or any other form of presentation - to parochial cures and only 8.6 per cent of those to the collegiate churches delivered these benefices to foreigners - including both Scotsmen and Irishmen as foreigners.

As a matter of fact, one of the points that calls for some explanation is that any of these foreigners should have been Scottish considering the state of declared or undeclared war which existed between Scotland and England during much of our period. Most of them whose place of origin can be fixed with any certainty came from the border country, for example John de Edirham, vicar of Berwick in 1318, from the Coldingham area of Berwickshire - that is to say a jurisdictional "peculiar" of Durham monastery - and John Ledell, vicar of Dalton in 1486 and of Seaham in 1501, possibly from the neighbourhood of Roxburgh, the castle of which had been recovered /

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observed in, for example, Pantin, The English Church in the fourteenth century, pp. 82-83; J. R. Moorman, Church life in England in the thirteenth century, p. 9; Stubbs, Constitutional history, iii, p. 322; Barraclough, Papal provisions, p. 10; and the preamble to the Statute of Provisors of 1351 (Statutes of the Realm, i, p. 316), where, however, the authors are rather more concerned about the loss of patronage due to papal provisions than with the incompetence of the foreign providees to perform their parochial duties.

recovered by the Scots from the English and destroyed as recently as 1460.[1] Since social and economic conditions on both sides of the not very clearly drawn border line were very similar, it is probable that such clerks were accepted as no less "local" than the Yorkshiremen, so long as political tempers were not inflamed against them personally.

At this point it will be as well to introduce the next table, which will illustrate the geographical distribution of the patronage of some of the chief patrons and groups of patrons. These are the bishop of Durham, the prior and convent of Durham, the king, other lay patrons, the houses of canons regular and the bishop of Carlisle. Institutions following upon the presentations of these patrons have, as in the tables above, been considered over the whole of our period.

Table 11

Provenance of beneficed clergy, 1311-1540

(a) Benefices in the gift of the bishop of Durham. (In this table the second of the two figures includes institutions to the collegiate churches: cf. table 10b)

Total institutions	721; 1,192
Number of institutions to clerks of known provenance	481; 807

[1] Hume Brown, History of Scotland, i, p. 248.

Number of those clerks who came from:-	diocese of Durham	141; 212	29.3% (of 481); 26.2% (of 807)
" "	diocese of Carlisle	21; 34	4.4% (of 481); 4.2% (of 807)
" "	diocese of York	166; 263	34.5% (of 481); 32.6% (of 807)
" "	other English dioceses	112; 229	23.3% (of 481); 28.4% (of 807)
" "	Scotland	3; 3	0.6% (of 481); 0.4% (of 807)
" "	Ireland	5; 7	1.0% (of 481); 0.9% (of 807)
" "	Europe	33; 59	6.9% (of 481) 7.3% (of 807)

(b) Benefices in the gift of the prior and convent of Durham.

Total institutions		371	
Number of institutions to clerks of known provenance		298	
Number of those clerks who came from:-	diocese of Durham	141	47.3% (of 298)
" "	diocese of Carlisle	21	7.1% "
" "	diocese of York	96	32.2% "
" "	other English dioceses	29	9.8% "
" "	Scotland	4	1.3% "
" "	Ireland	3	1.0% "
" "	Europe	4	1.3% "

(c) /

(c) Benefices in the royal gift.

Total institutions		40	
Number of institutions to clerks of known provenance		27	
Number of those clerks who came from:-	diocese of Durham	10	37.1% (of 27)
" "	diocese of Carlisle	2	7.4% "
" "	diocese of York	7	25.9% "
" "	other English dioceses	8	29.6% "
" "	Scotland	-	-
" "	Ireland	-	-
" "	Europe	-	-

(d) Benefices in the gift of lay patrons other than the king.

Total institutions		200	
Number of institutions to clerks of known provenance		138	
Number of those clerks who came from:-	diocese of Durham	65	47.1% (of 138)
" "	diocese of Carlisle	7	5.1% "
" "	diocese of York	39	28.2% "
" "	other English dioceses	20	14.5% "
" "	Scotland	4	3.0% "
" "	Ireland	-	-
" "	Europe	3	2.1% "

(e) Benefices in the gift of houses of canons regular.

Total institutions		130	
Number of institutions to clerks of known provenance		97	
Number of those clerks who came from:-	diocese of Durham	66	68.0% (of 97)
" "	diocese of Carlisle	3	3.1% "
" "	diocese of York	21	21.7% "
" "	other English dioceses	3	3.1% "
" "	Scotland	3	3.1% "
" "	Ireland	-	-
" "	Europe	1	1.0% "

(f) Benefices in the gift of the bishop of Carlisle.

Total institutions		59	
Number of institutions to clerks of known provenance		35	
Number of those clerks who came from:-	diocese of Durham	12	34.3% (of 35)
" "	diocese of Carlisle	11	31.4% "
" "	diocese of York	3	8.6% "
" "	other English dioceses	6	17.1% "
" "	Scotland	-	-
" "	Ireland	1	2.9% "
" "	Europe	2	5.7% "

In the six sections of this table there are enumerated the institutions to most of the parish churches in the diocese of Durham; only the few in the gift of monastic houses other than the priory of Durham have been omitted, for they seemed to have too little in common with each other to form a group.

Of the two groups of patrons the institutions to whose benefices have been tabulated in sections 'd' and 'e', the houses of canons regular were more homogeneous than the laymen. They were all north of England houses and therefore somewhat remote, and none was particularly wealthy. Thus they did not attract their brethren from afar, and most of their canons were of local stock. Naturally this was bound to be reflected in the clergy of their appropriated churches, since most of these churches were served by canons of the patron house.[1] It is therefore the less surprising that 92.8 per cent of such clergy were natives of the ecclesiastical province of York, and that 68 per cent of them came from the diocese of Durham itself. This represents the highest proportion of local clergy in any of the groups of benefices with which we are dealing: indeed it must be one of the highest in England.

But the fact that they appointed clerks to their churches from within their own convents places the Augustinian and Premonstratensian canons in a special position. Among those patrons who were so to speak in the open market for clerks, the priory of Durham /

[1] See above, pp. 218-220.

Durham was the one which most frequently favoured local men, making 86.6 per cent of its appointments from the clergy of the province of York and 47.3 per cent of them from those of the diocese of Durham. Next come the lay patrons, who, as a group, appointed 79.5 per cent of their incumbents from north of the Trent, and 47.2 per cent - only just below the figure for Durham priory - from the home diocese itself. The bishop of Carlisle, although making all but three quarters (74.3%) of his appointments to his Durham churches from the northern province, was considerably more generous than any of the other patrons to clerks of his own diocese; and while 31.4 per cent of his effective presentations went to Carlisle clerks, no other single patron or group put forward more than 7.4 per cent of their candidates from the clergy of this diocese.

Although the royal presentations led to the highest figure in all the tables for incumbents from the province of Canterbury (29.6%), this figure was achieved not at the cost of clergy from the north of England, from whom 70.4 per cent of appointments were made, but rather by the total exclusion of all foreign clerks. That the king, on whom so many claims for benefices were made, should so often have preferred local clerks is a measure of the strength of local ties in the exercise of patronage in the diocese, although this preference may have been dictated as much by the unpopularity of the large and remote royal benefices of Haltwhistle, Knaresdale and Simonburn with the southern clergy as by a definite royal policy. Certainly, from the fact that 166 royal clerks - many /

many from outside of Durham - received benefices in the diocese during our period,[1] while only 40 institutions were made to the churches in continual royal presentation, it is clear that the crown was mainly active as an indirect and occasional patron, and, as has already been noted, these aspects of patronage are not revealed in the tables which are at present being considered. The fact is that the royal clerks were more interested in obtaining the wealthy livings in the episcopal gift than in receiving such onerous and remote cures as Simonburn and Haltwhistle.[2] In general, in those Durham benefices which were least attractive because of poverty, danger or isolation, the nature of the incumbents was dictated not so much by the composition of the patron's clientele as by the availability of clerks willing to accept the cure, who were usually men of local origin.

The small number and the nature of the parish churches in the regular gift of the king makes it dangerous to generalise from the total absence of foreign clerks among their incumbents; there were certainly some foreigners in government service, and some of them received benefices in the gift of the bishop of Durham.[3] Indeed the /

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[1] See below, p. 357.

[2] So far as can be traced, 6 royal clerks were appointed to Simonburn, 3 to Knaresdale and 1 to Haltwhistle; while 8 held the rectory of Bishop Wearmouth, 9 the archdeaconry of Durham, and 6 the deanery of Auckland, to mention only three episcopal benefices. (See below, vol. 2, under the benefices named.)

[3] E.g. William de Cusancia, Royal Treasurer and Canon of Auckland in 1358. (See below, vol. 2, under Auckland, prebendaries, (a); F.D.; and cf. Tout, Chapters, iii, p. 86.)

the bishops of Durham and Carlisle were - reckoning by percentage of their total collations - more generous to foreign clergy than any of the other Durham patrons, and the 59 institutions of foreign clerks to benefices in the gift of the bishop of Durham exceed all institutions of foreigners to other benefices in the diocese by much more than a hundred per cent.[1] But even the relatively lucrative and attractive benefices in the episcopal gift numbered a percentage of only 8.6 of foreign clergy among their incumbents. Thus less than a tenth of the institutions to even the most sought after group of benefices - and, moreover, the group at which papal provisions were most frequently directed[2] - went to non-English clergymen.

While the bishop of Durham was proportionately less generous than the other patrons to local clerks, 63 per cent of his institutions still went to clergy from north of the Trent. It is noticeable that the majority of the northern English clerks who held episcopal benefices were natives of the diocese of York. The fact is not, perhaps, particularly noteworthy in view of the large geographical area, population and number of ecclesiastical foundations of this diocese compared with those of Durham and Carlisle, yet it does indicate that the patronage for the episcopal benefices of Durham diocese was fairly evenly distributed over the area of northern England. Institutions to royal benefices, and to those of /

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[1] Institutions to foreign clerks in table 11 b-f total 25.

[2] See above, table 8, between pp. 302 and 303.

of the laity, the priory of Durham and the regular canons, were mainly concentrated upon the native clergy of the diocese of Durham; while the bishops of Carlisle understandably presented nearly as many clerks of their own diocese as of the diocese of Durham and nearly four times as many as those they chose from the diocese of York. However, the bishop of Carlisle's churches were too few and the numerical preponderance of York clergy in the bishop of Durham's benefices too slight, for the trends of institutions in either group of benefices to outweigh the preference for Durham clerks which was shown by the patrons of the diocesan churches in general.

The final table to be presented as evidence of the provenance of the Durham incumbents provides an analysis not by patron but by period. Three periods have been chosen, the first two of which (1351-1380 and 1406-1435) coincide roughly with the episcopates of Thomas Hatfield and Thomas Langley, whose registers are extant; while the third (1491-1540) includes the episcopates of both Richard Fox and, in part, of Cuthbert Tunstall, whose registers cover nearly twenty of these fifty years. These three periods have been chosen mainly because they are well documented by episcopal registers; but also because they represent three stretches of time, fairly well spaced out, over which the current trends in appointments may usefully be considered. The years 1351 to 1380, most of Hatfield's long episcopate, formed a comparatively peaceful period in the ecclesiastical history of the diocese during the later middle ages. Wycliffe's doctrines made no deep impression, the /

the Great Schism had only just begun and the period of conciliar reform was in the future. The internal struggles among the ecclesiastical powers in the diocese - bishop, priory, archdeacons - had spent their strength,[1] and the great transfer of advowsons from the laity to the religious houses was in its last and minor stage.[2] Almost exactly at the middle of our period come the three decades, 1406 to 1435, which found bishop Langley occupying the see of Durham. These years saw the ending of the Great Schism in the Conciliar Movement and the first of the papal concordats with the rising principalities of western Europe. The recent Statutes of Provisors and Praemunire marked an important, if by contemporaries unrecognised, stage in the gradual emancipation of the church in England from the practical aspects of papal direction, and in the early years of the 15th century their effect was apparent in a distinct decline in the number of papal provisions.[3] The final century of the pre-Reformation church is ushered in by these thirty years, and in all essentials the Durham church did not alter from what it was at this period until the monks were dispersed. To this event, the third of our periods forms the prelude, and it has been chosen in order to give a picture of the composition of the incumbents of Durham benefices in the fifty years immediately before their most numerous late mediaeval patrons, the religious houses, were swept away. This period has been extended to fifty years /

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[1] See above, pp. 139-140.
[2] See above, p. 183, note 1.
[3] See above, p. 304.

years, as distinct from the thirty of the first two, in order to include the institutions in both Fox's and Tunstall's registers and to increase the total of the figures to be analysed. Evidence of appointments to all the less important benefices, save those of the priory of Durham which are recorded in the priory register, is scantier in this period than in the other two.[1]

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[1] It may be of interest to have separately the figures for the two periods covered by the registers of Bishops Fox and Tunstall (1494–1501 and 1530–1540) for comparison with those for the years 1491 to 1540 recorded in tables 12a and 12b.

(a) With cure of souls

Period	Total institutions	Institutions to clerks of known provenance	Institutions to clerks of Province of York	Institutions to clerks of Province of Canterbury	Institutions to foreign clerks
1494–1501	119	60	50 83.3%	9 15.0%	1 1.7%
1530–1540	109	44	38 86.4%	6 13.6%	-

(b) Without cure of souls (i.e. canons of collegiate churches).

1494–1501	3	3	3 100.0%	-	-
1530–1540	24	8	7 87.5%	-	1 12.5%

The table is constructed on the same general plan as numbers 10 and 11 above. The percentages - like those in the tables on p. 331, footnote 1 - are of the institutions to clerks of known provenance.

Table 12

Provenance of beneficed clergy

(a) With cure of souls.

Period	Total institutions	Institutions to clerks of known provenance	Institutions to clerks of Province of York	Institutions to clerks of Province of Canterbury	Institutions to foreign clerks
1351-1380	394	292	222 76.0%	57 19.5%	13 4.5%
1406-1435	353	255	208 81.5%	42 16.5%	5 2.0%
1491-1540	386	181	149 82.3%	27 14.9%	5 2.8%

(b) Without cure of souls (i.e. canons of collegiate churches).

1351-1380	165	116	63 54.3%	47 40.5%	6 5.2%
1406-1435	115	90	51 56.7%	38 42.2%	1 1.1%
1491-1540	36	15	12 80.0%	2 13.3%	1 6.7%

A noticeable feature of these tables is that the trends shown in both, although considerably more pronounced in the figures for the /

the institutions to the canonries, are of the same nature. Clerks from the north of England are found occupying an ever greater proportion of Durham benefices, with and without cure of souls, in the course of the later middle ages. Correspondingly, the numbers of institutions to the clergy of the south suffered a constant decrease; while the flow of foreigners into the churches of the diocese had contracted by the early 15th century to an insignificant trickle, which in point of absolute numbers it remained to the end, in spite of a percentage increase in the early 16th century.

For the third period (1491-1540), the figures are unfortunately both scantier and less reliable than those for the first two. In the first place, there was a considerable drop in the number of institutions, partly because the worst era of the plague had passed, and partly, no doubt, because the very fact that more local people were being appointed in this period would result in a greater average length in the tenure of benefices, since not many of them would be likely to find or would perhaps want to find jobs elsewhere. Secondly, because surnames ever more rarely and more uncertainly denoted place of origin, it became equally more difficult to "place" the average incumbent and thus to produce the figures for the column in the tables headed "Institutions to clerks of known provenance." The difficulty was increased since the main source of information, the bishops' registers, gained in formality and lost in /

in informativeness.[1] The margin of error in our calculations for the period 1491 to 1540 is therefore very high and the results should be treated with caution. On the other hand, they do tend to confirm the trend towards an increasing local exclusiveness in the appointment of the clergy which had already begun in the early 15th century. In table number 12a the proportions in the last three columns do not vary much, while in number 12b they vary a lot, but in both they vary in the same way and in a constant progression.

The very small number of foreigners who were instituted in all three periods makes it a difficult matter to generalise about the trends which governed their appointment to the Durham benefices. What does seem clear, however, is that there was a sharp alteration in such trends between our first and our second periods - probably, that is, towards the end of the 14th century; an alteration which more than halved the number of foreigners instituted. Almost certainly this decline in the number of institutions to foreign clerks is a further reflection of the effectiveness of the Statutes of Provisors and Praemunire of 1390 and 1393 respectively, for the majority of the foreign clerks received the comparatively wealthy benefices in the gift of the bishop of Durham,[2] the very benefices to /

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[1] See Hamilton Thompson, The English clergy, pp. 7-9, on the increasing formalisation of the episcopal registers during the later middle ages, and on the decline in their variety and scope of information. It is a sad fact that Fox's register is much less helpful to us than Hatfield's, and infinitely less so than Kellawe's.

[2] See table 12 above, p. 332.

to which most papal provisions were made.[1]

(ii) The education of the clergy.

The records leave no doubt that opinion in the later middle ages attached considerable importance to the education of the clergy, both in the universities and in the many grammar and song schools. In the diocese of Durham, schools were founded in the city of Durham by members of the local gentry, by the monastery of Durham and by the bishops. Schools were attached to most of the monasteries and collegiate churches in the diocese, while the prior and convent maintained schools on their Yorkshire properties at Howden, Hemingbrough and Northallerton. In 1380 the Hall maintained in Oxford by the priory of Durham was converted into an endowed college by Bishop Hatfield, and in the next few years churches were assigned to its endowment. Local connections with Balliol and Merton colleges were also close and were strengthened by the appropriation of the churches of Embleton, Ponteland and Longbenton.[2]

Nor was the interest of lay and ecclesiastical patrons confined to the establishment of places of instruction; thereafter they sent or recommended to be sent to these places, and maintained, many local youths who in one way or another had been brought to their attention. In the 15th century, the small register of Durham priory /

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[1] Cf. the analysis of the numbers of petitions for benefices made to the pope on p. 285 above.

[2] V.C.H. Durham, iii, pp. 365-371.

priory is full of references to the dispatch of local boys to their Yorkshire schools and, even more impressive, to the promotion and maintenance of local Durham and Yorkshire[1] scholars at Oxford, by clergy, nobles, gentry and burgesses. On the 9th of April, 1471, for example, William Burton and John Bell of Raby, the latter a chaplain, agreed to pay £20 to the monks of Durham for the upkeep of Robert Bell of the diocese of Durham (a relative of John) in Durham College; while on June the 7th in the same year Nicholas Smyth of Northallerton and Thomas Smith, a chaplain, made a similar agreement for the benefit of John Smith, son of Nicholas.[2] It is more than likely in these two cases that the chaplains were acting as trustees and that the money was entirely forthcoming from the laymen. Earlier in the 15th century, in an undated document which may be assigned to Wessington's priorate (1416–1446), Henry, earl of Northumberland, offered to reimburse the monks of Durham for the maintenance at Oxford of the son of one Thomas (Birhalkhie?) of Berwick.[3] Sums of £20 in each case were promised, in 1495 by John Lawson and Thomas Hilton on behalf of Robert Lawson, son of the former; in 1477 by John Esyngton of Newcastle for his son, John, and by William Rothom of Newcastle for Christopher Foster, son /

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[1] The constitution of Durham College, Oxford, provided for membership by eight monks of Durham, and of eight "secular scholars", four from the diocese of Durham, and two each from the Yorkshire "peculiars" of Northallerton and Howden. (Ibid., p. 366.)

[2] R.P. ii, ff. 151v–152.

[3] Loc. xxv, 163.

son of the late John Foster.[1] Each of these young men was to be maintained and educated at Durham College. Frequently the maintenance of a scholar was a protracted responsibility; in the late 14th century we find a monk urging the promotion of a young graduate whom he had been maintaining for eight years.[2] The disadvantages of interrupting a course of study were fully recognised.[3] Such patronage of scholars was not, moreover, confined to the period of their studies, and the earl of Northumberland wrote to Prior Wessington asking him to confer one of the priory livings on Henry Strother, "son of our cousin William Strother," presently at Durham College.[4] Probably, of course, the chief motive of the patron in making such a request was, as in the case of the monk mentioned above, to relieve himself of the responsibility of maintaining the scholar.

The direct method of fostering education by sending boys to school and university was balanced by the more indirect method used by ecclesiastical authorities from the pope downwards when they insisted on certain educational standards being reached by the incumbents of benefices. Applicants were examined before institution, and even when in possession of a benefice, the clerk was not immune from /

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1 R.P. iii, ff. 37; ii, ff. 173-173v, 175v.

2 Durham, Dean and Chapter Library, MS.C.IV.25, f. 41B, quoted by W. A. Pantin in Letters from Durham registers.

3 Durham, Dean and Chapter, Muniments, Register N, Registrum papireum diversarum literarum cancellarie Dunelm, f. 53v, quoted ibid.

4 Loc. xxv, 164.

from complaint about his lack of educational qualifications. In 1497, for example, Bishop Fox warned a chaplain, John Wotton, against officiating in the diocese of Durham until he was better instructed in the art of grammar.[1] On the other hand, there were practical rewards for scholarship which were clearly stated to be such, as when James de Aviso was collated to a prebend in Norton by Bishop Kellawe "virtutum studiis quibus vigilanter insistis."[2]

There is evidence, however, which suggests that the popes and the bishops, in making appointments to the majority of not outstandingly valuable local livings, were rather less concerned with obtaining clerks of high university attainments than with finding pious men of good repute who were likely to be suitable to their parishioners' spiritual needs. In 1312 Bishop Kellawe collated Robert de Queldrik to the chapel of Ryngstanhirst, "de tuāe conversationis honestate laudabili, quod a multis accepimus, testimonium acceptantes, in tuique nominis bono odore plurimum delectati."[3] Naturally enough, the machinery of pre-institution or pre-provision examination was directed not so much at the applicant's academic qualifications, if any, since these spoke for themselves in the shape of degrees. Piety, character and the educational standards of non-graduates were the chief subjects of inquiry, and especially at the curia it appears that a degree could be made to cover a multitude /

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[1] S.S. cxlvii, p. 45.
[2] R.P.D. i, p. 520.
[3] Ibid., p. 266.

multitude of sins. Under Pope Gregory XI (1370-1378) all graduates in law, both civil and canon, theology and medicine were exempted from examination, although with the reservation, "si cum rigore examinis licentiam huiusmodi receperunt."[1]

The degree thus formed an important line of ecclesiastical class distinction. Graduate clergy, in addition to possessing a wider and deeper knowledge of the arts and, possibly, theology and law than the non-graduates, had opened up to them the university avenues to patronage in the rolls of petitions. Most of them were also necessarily more widely travelled and hence experienced than the majority of their non-graduate colleagues. This is not to say that an Oxford Bachelor of Theology would be ipso facto of more use in helping to solve the spiritual, moral or material problems of a Northumberland shepherd than a parish chaplain who had rarely stepped far outwith the parochial boundaries of Elsdon or Haltwhistle; but it was essentially to its university trained clergy that the Durham church had to look for guidance in determining its attitude to the great religious and political questions of our period. The fewer the graduates employed in its cures and its administration, the less likely it was to take up any position at all upon such questions as Lollardy, the Conciliar Movement and the Reformation. Its comparative indifference to the first two issues and its conservatism with regard to the last, might be held to indicate that indeed they were few.

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[1] Mollat, La collation des bénéfices ecclésiastiques à l'époque des papes d'Avignon, p. 45.

The chief purpose of the present section is to discover with as much statistical accuracy as the imperfections of the records will permit, just what was the proportion of graduates among the beneficed clergy. As usual our figures - especially those taken over long periods - are of value not as absolutes but in relation to others. While the number of known inductions of graduates between 1311 and 1540 is certainly less than the absolute total, because of deficiencies in the records, it is of some significance when set beside the total number of known inductions obtained from the same records. One further reservation must, however, be made; for there is no sure way of making precise allowances for the Durham incumbents who may have studied at a university for some years without taking a degree. Such clerks had much of the experience of the graduates, and some of them a little of the learning and ability. Yet, for statistical purposes, they can be included only among the non-graduates. Just how serious may be the resultant distortion in our impressions of the education of the Durham clergy it is impossible to say with any accuracy. According to his register, Bishop Hatfield gave thirty clerks of Durham diocese licence to leave their benefices for varying periods for the purpose of studying at a university and only five of them are known from university or diocesan records to have graduated. A few of the others may have graduated; but probably most did not and moreover did not intend to, for the majority of the licences were for only one or two years and were not renewed. Even the initial B.A. degree /

degree required at least three years' residence. K. B. McFarlane suggests that "at Oxford in the fifteenth century only a third of the starters became bachelors and a sixth masters,"[1] and goes on to note the usual factors which prevented students from completing their courses: "One difficulty was expense; idleness and vice were others; above all, lack of aptitude." If the last part of this statement be true, there is some justification for classifying the non-graduate students along with the mass of the clerks who never attended a university at all in the following tables. At any rate by doing so we shall keep in line with the practice of the contemporary church and lay authorities, to whom in matters of status it was the degree which counted. As McFarlane puts it: "churchmen ... were divided into the two nations of masters and men. The masters were the masters of arts,"[2] and: "the church was ruled by an aristocracy of graduates."[3] It is therefore of some importance to find out what proportion of the beneficed clergy in the diocese of Durham belonged to this aristocracy.

Documents of presentation and induction normally recorded the degree of the prospective incumbent if he had one; but unfortunately they usually did no more; most important they did not specify the university of graduation. From various other sources this information can occasionally be obtained, and it is sometimes possible to identify /

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[1] McFarlane, John Wycliffe and the beginnings of English nonconformity, p. 21; cf. Pantin, op.cit., p. 29.

[2] McFarlane, op.cit., p. 14.

[3] Ibid., p. 13.

identify the graduate incumbents with contemporary namesakes in the records of the universities of Oxford and Cambridge. Once again, however, it is the important people about whom we can collect the largest amount of accurate information; while the identification of the clerk who was no more than a parish priest remains speculative. Venn's Alumni Cantabrigienses is particularly helpful, since it lists such members of the university as the compiler could trace from the 13th century onwards and thus covers the whole of our period. The equivalent source for Oxford scholars, Foster's Alumni Oxonienses, begins only in the year 1500. A few of Durham's graduate incumbents may be identified in the volumes of the Oxford Historical Society, the Register of the University of Oxford, volume 1, 1884, and the Memorials of Merton College, 1885, providing especially useful lists.

In the tables which follow, therefore, the total number of graduates among the known incumbents is fairly reliable, based as it is for the most part on records of appointment. But the meagre evidence for identifying the universities attended by the graduates (except for the last forty years of the third period in table 13c, 1491-1540, which are covered by both Venn and Foster) does not justify more than very tentative conclusions. In tables 13a, b and c, figures are given for the numbers of graduates who are known to have held law degrees, since a legal training was the best preparation for the higher administrative posts in church and state and, accordingly, the surest road to the best benefices. With these /

these figures we are on safer ground, for in the various records of appointment it was usually noted if the clerk had a higher degree.

The arrangement is similar to that adopted for the earlier tables in the present chapter. Thus table 13a gives general figures covering the whole of our period; table 13b presents the figures for benefices in the gift of particular patrons; table 13c gives figures for the three separate periods, 1351 to 1380, 1406 to 1435 and 1491 to 1540. In table 13d the provenance of the graduate clergy is indicated, and in table 13e an attempt is made to show the number of graduate appointments to the humbler benefices - the vicarages which required residence - in comparison with the number made to the more desirable benefices which either did not require constant residence or in which non-residence was more easily arranged.

Table 13

Graduate incumbents of Durham benefices, 1311 - 1540

(a) General.

Total institutions	Institutions of graduates	Institutions of graduates in law	Institutions of graduates of Oxford	Institutions of graduates of Cambridge
2,404	521 21.7% (of 2,404)	183	65	82

(b) Institutions to benefices arranged according to the patron.

Patron	Total institutions	Institutions of graduates	Institutions of graduates in law	Institutions of graduates of Oxford	Institutions of graduates of Cambridge
Bishop of Durham (canonries included)	1,192	347 29%	123	29	62
Priory of Durham	371	83 22.4%	33	11	7
King	40	5 12.5%	-	-	1
Other lay patrons	200	26 13%	11	3	6
Canons regular	130	3 2.3%	1	-	-
Bishop of Carlisle	59	17 28.8%	6	2	3

(c) Figures for the three periods, 1351-80, 1406-35, 1491-1540.

Period	Total institutions (including those to canonries)	Institutions of graduates	Institutions of graduates in law	Institutions of graduates of Oxford	Institutions of graduates of Cambridge
1351-1380	559	72 12.9%	17	10	1
1406-1435	468	118 25.2%	55	6	5
1491-1540	422	148 35.1%	68	35	66

(d) Provenance of graduate incumbents.

	Institutions to graduates of known provenance	Institutions to graduates of the Province of York	Institutions to graduates of the Province of Canterbury	Institutions to foreign graduates
Benefices with cure of souls	259	200 77.1%	51 19.8%	8 3.1%
Canonries of collegiate churches	76	36 48.7%	33 43.4%	6 8.9%

(e) Proportion of graduate vicars.

Nature of benefices as in 1536	Total institutions	Institutions of graduates	Percentage of graduates
Vicarages	905	131	14.5%
Rectories, deaneries, canonries, archdeaconries	1,499	390	26%

While the bishopric of Durham did not lack a fair share of graduates among the incumbents of its benefices, it is more open to question whether a large proportion of these graduates really had much contact with the people who attended the parish churches. On an average, it would seem that at any given time in the later middle ages something less than a fifth of the beneficed clergy with whom this thesis is concerned held university degrees.[1] But this /

[1] As is shown in table 13a, 21.7% of institutions were of graduates; but since graduates were frequently members of the ecclesiastical upper class of pluralists and swift exchangers from benefice to benefice the actual proportion of graduates among the clergy would be less than that shown by a percentage calculated from institutions.

this graduate fifth of the beneficed clergy was not distributed evenly over the various types of benefices. Table 13e shows unmistakably, even allowing for a reasonable margin of error in the figures, that the great majority of graduates was concentrated in the benefices with the highest status and the fewest inescapable responsibilities. Absenteeism among the archdeacons and even on occasion among the deans of the collegiate churches was only too frequent; while both rectories and canonries could sometimes be regarded by patrons and academic recipients as bursaries which enabled them to continue their university studies. Although such a view may or may not have been reprehensible on moral grounds, there was nothing against it canonically, provided that official licence was obtained and that a suitable substitute - vicar or curate - was maintained by the absentee incumbent, so that due provision was made for the cure of souls - "proviso tamen, quod ecclesia tua debitis interim obsequiis, minime defraudetur, nec animarum cura negligatur aliquatenus in eadem," as Bishop Kellawe's clerk put it in a "leave of absence" to Robert Eryum, rector of Wooler, dated 11 February, 1312/13.[1] Nor is there any certain evidence that this proviso was frequently neglected,[2] although conclusions /

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[1] R.P.D. i, p. 289.

[2] Bishop Kellawe's register, the fullest of the bishop's registers which has survived, contains a general mandate for sequestration in case of non-residence, "quia nonnulli ... rectores, potius vagare volentes quam animas Deo lucrifacere, in ecclesiis suis personaliter non resident ... per quod animarum cura negligitur" (ibid., p. 466-7); but only two specific charges are brought during the 5 years it covers, one in 1311 and one in 1316 (ibid. /

conclusions about the state of discipline among the Durham clergy must be regarded as tentative. The point which emerges fairly clearly is that, while the authorities were inclined to encourage the parish clergyman to obtain a university education, the benefit was intended to fall upon the clergyman himself as an increase in his knowledge and cultivation, or upon scholarship as his prospective contribution to it, or upon the church and specifically the university as a result of the prestige he might bring to these institutions. There is little or no indication that anybody sent a clerk to Oxford for the specific purpose of making him a better parish priest, and indeed the university was rather the clergyman's golden road to the avoidance of direct parochial responsibilities.[1]

On the other hand, there is no evidence that all the "plums" among the Durham benefices were falling into the laps of foreign or southern graduates who had no connection at all with the diocese or the north of England. From table 13d it is apparent that even in the collegiate churches nearly one half of the appointments of graduates went to natives of the north; while more than three quarters of the graduate appointments to benefices with cure of souls went to local men. Indeed the percentages which sum up the provenance of graduate incumbents in table 13d are very similar to those /

(ibid. i, p. 77; ii, p. 825). Hatfield's register, covering the years 1345 to 1380, contains only two charges of unauthorised non-residence, one in 1353 and one in 1354 (R.H. ff. 73(29); 87-88). The registers of Fox and Tunstall do not mention the subject.

[1] Cf. Pantin, The English Church, p. 29.

those which result from the general figures covering all incumbents in tables 10a and 10b: 77.1% of appointments to benefices with cures went to northern English graduates, 19.8% to southerners, and 3.1% to foreigners; the equivalent proportions for institutions of all incumbents were 77.5%, 16.4% and 6.1%. In the case of the collegiate churches the percentages were: appointments to graduates - 48.7% to northerners, 43.4% to southerners, 8.9% to foreigners; and to all clerks - 55.5% to northerners, 35.9% to southerners, 8.6% to foreigners. Thus, while the graduates frequently did get the best jobs, they were no less likely to be local men than were the majority of the non-graduates.

This is the more surprising when we consider that the majority of the graduate appointments - 347 out of 521 as is shown by table 13b - were made to churches in the gift of the bishops of Durham, who were the most likely of all the patrons to favour non-local clerks partly on account of their own frequent southern connections.[1] The priory of Durham, which was the patron - next to the bishops of Durham and Carlisle - with the greatest proportion of graduates among the incumbents of its churches, was in a special position. Maintaining as it did its own college in Oxford, for both religious and seculars who were natives of the diocese of Durham or of the priory estates in Yorkshire, the priory might be expected to train a fair number of local clerks at Oxford and then provide them with a livelihood in its churches. Of course the vast majority of the larger /

[1] See table 11.

larger priory churches were appropriated and hence the incumbent could hope to receive only the vicar's stipend; moreover, the incompleteness of the record allows us to follow only one or two of these protégés of the monks to Oxford and back to Durham churches;[1] yet even when such reservations are made, the fact remains /

[1] Usually we have to rely only on the coincidence of names and dates. Thus Robert Hertilpoill appears as a scholar at Durham College, Oxford, in 1434 (R.P. i, f. 80v) and in 1461 a person of that name was vicar of Aycliffe, which was in the gift of the priory of Durham. (See below, vol. 2.) In 1445 the Durham monks sent William Robynson of Morpeth to Oxford (R.P. i, f. 192) and in 1463 one of that name occurred as vicar of Ellingham, probably on the presentation of the monks. More doubtfully, John Smith of Northallerton, who in 1472 was sent to Durham College by the monks with the financial support of his family (ibid. ii, f. 152), may perhaps be identified with the John Smythe who resigned the vicarage of Longbenton in 1548 (and who may well have held it for forty years - F.D., p. 199). If this identification is correct, Smith was probably indebted for his preferment to connections which he established in Oxford, for Longbenton was in the gift of Balliol College. (See below, vol. 2.) Rather more is known about the priest, Henry Strother, a relative of the earl of Northumberland, who was studying at Durham College, Oxford, when the earl asked Prior Wessington to present him to one of the priory's benefices. (Loc. xxv, 164.) In fact, Strother held no benefice - in the diocese of Durham at any rate - other than the vicarage of Hartburn to which the bishop of Durham collated. In 1434/35 he received a papal indult to be absent from this benefice for seven years' study. (See below, vol. 2; C.P.L. viii, p. 506.) It should be noted that none of these clerks, so far as can be traced, obtained a university degree, a further reminder of the danger of assuming that only graduates had received any university education. (Cf. above, pp.340-341.)

remains that out of 58 appointments to graduates whose place of origin we know, the monks gave 50 (86.2%) to clerks from the province of York.

It is to be expected that, given its close connections with Oxford, the bulk of the priory's graduate appointees were scholars of this university. While lack of evidence prevents us from reaching any hard and fast conclusions about the universities attended by most of the Durham graduate incumbents in the 14th and early 15th centuries, there is a very strong case for assuming that the majority were, in fact, students of Oxford. Much of the period coincided with the sporadic outbreaks of war between England and France which increased the difficulty of continental travel in general and of an Englishman's attendance at the great University of Paris in particular. The University of Cambridge, on the other hand, did not begin to attain its present equality of standing with Oxford until the last hundred years of our period, and its earlier student body was much smaller than that of Oxford.[1] The very few available statistics which have been presented in table 13c at any rate bear out the probabilities of the matter, and show only in the last period, 1491 to 1540, a decided preponderance of Cambridge graduates in Durham benefices. Again, although once more the statistics are meagre in the extreme, table 13b lends support to the supposition that the priory of Durham's connections with Oxford were particularly close, for it is the only patron which - on the known /

[1] Rashdall, The universities of Europe in the middle ages. New ed. by Powicke and Emden, iii, p. 285.

known figures - presented more Oxford than Cambridge graduates to its benefices over our whole period.

But it would be a mistake to interpret the tables too rigidly - after all there was no reason why a clerk should not have attended both Oxford and Cambridge, or Oxford and Paris, or Cambridge and Cologne, or what other combination you will, and yet have attendance at only one of them shown in the records - and it is wisest to say merely that probably the majority of graduates in the Durham churches up to the middle of the 15th century were primarily Oxford men;[1] but that later the balance swung fairly quickly to favour the eastern university, as is decisively revealed in the considerably more plentiful figures available for the period, 1491 to 1540 (table 13c). The partial eclipse of Oxford in the later middle ages is traditionally ascribed to the cloud of official disfavour which enveloped the thought and activities of Wycliffe and his followers. Something of the rise of Cambridge is probably also due to its proximity to the homes of the wealthy merchant families in the east coast ports. Certainly, once established, it tended to draw the youth of the eastern counties away from Oxford,[2] and so far as Durham itself is concerned the connection with Cambridge which flourished in the early 16th century has its analogy at the present time, when Oxford graduates are outnumbered by those of Cambridge /

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[1] Of course the last two columns of table 13a do show an overall preponderance of Cambridge graduates; but it is fairly obvious that the few figures available for the 14th and 15th centuries are completely overweighted by the statistics available from 1500: these, of course, swing decisively in the favour of Cambridge.

[2] Cf. Venn, op.cit., i, preface p. xii, where it is shown that the majority of the ordinands in eastern dioceses were Cambridge men.

Cambridge on the teaching staff of Durham University (including King's College, Newcastle) by a hundred to eighty-three.[1]

The usual mediaeval university courses led in the first instance to the degree of Bachelor of Arts, then, for the persistent, to that of M.A. Progress thereafter was into one of the higher faculties of theology, law or medicine. With one or two exceptions (graduates in medicine) all the graduates appointed to benefices in the diocese of Durham during the later middle ages held degrees in arts alone, or in arts and theology, or in arts and law. Figures for theology graduates have not been distinguished in tables 13a - 13c (there were, as a matter of fact, 77 known institutions of theologians), because possession of a degree in theology does not seem to have been of the same practical importance in the contest for Durham benefices as the possession of one in law. The lawyers were, essentially, the administrators of the mediaeval church, and the reward of the administrator was preferment. Well over double the number of appointments which went to theology graduates went to lawyers - 183. Therefore the overall picture which we have from the figures available is of a total of 521 institutions of graduates, 260 having higher degrees and the remaining 261 being M.A.s or B.A.s, an almost exactly equal division. But since the theologians and the lawyers belonged to the class of graduates most likely to be appointed to several benefices in the diocese simultaneously /

[1] University of Durham Calendar for the year 1953-1954, vol. i, pp. 76-80, 89-113.

taneously or in fairly swift succession, the proportion of graduates who held higher degrees would be rather smaller than the ratio obtained from the statistics of institutions.

The proportion of lawyers to graduates in the figures of institutions did not remain constant throughout the later middle ages. It altered from 23.6% in the period 1351 to 1380 to nearly 50% over the years 1406 to 1435 and 1491 to 1540. This increase, coinciding as it did with a rise both in the percentage and absolute number of graduates appointed, indicates a fairly steep rise in the general academic quality of the Durham beneficed clergy as our period progressed. Admittedly, the years 1351-80 were those of the 14th century outbreaks of plague, which might conceivably have resulted in a decrease in the numbers of the clergy with a lessening of competition for benefices and a resultant lowering in the quality of the clergy appointed. We have already seen, however, that the Black Death did not strike the diocese of Durham with the force with which it affected the south and midlands of England.[1] In fact - so far as the available statistics show - the percentage of lawyers among graduate appointees actually showed an increase in the period 1351 to 1380 over the figure for the years 1311 to 1345: 23.6% as compared with 18.7%, although the overall proportion of graduates in the records of institutions suffered a sharp decline between the same two periods, from 20.4% in the years 1311 /

[1] See above, p. 45.

1311 to 1345 to 12.9% in the years 1351 to 1380. As a check on the situation before and immediately after the Black Death it is useful to quote here the complete figures obtainable for the period 1311 to 1345 so that they can be compared with those in the first line of table 13c:-

1311 to 1345

Total institutions	Institutions of graduates	Institutions of graduates in law
445	91; 20.4% (of 445)	17; 18.7% (of 91)

Thus there was, as we supposed, a decline in the number of graduates among the Durham beneficed clergy immediately after the Black Death, which coincided with a general fall in the number of the English clergy and hence of applicants for benefices. Significantly enough, the later increases in the proportion of graduates in the Durham church during the 15th and early 16th centuries took place when, as was shown in chapter 1,[1] the numbers of the clergy were increasing in accord with a general rise in the population. Throughout the later middle ages no additional benefices of the types which we are considering came into existence; indeed there was a slight decrease in the actual number, while appropriation lowered, on the whole, the value of several of those remaining. Thus, even a slight increase in the total number of northern English clergy was liable to increase the competition for Durham /

[1] See above, p. 39, table.

Durham benefices, and therefore to raise the standards necessary for institution. It is unnecessary to labour this point, but it must be noted, because it forms the most obvious, and probably the most important, reason for the very noticeably expanding proportion of graduate incumbents which - apart from the latter half of the 14th century - is a prevailing characteristic of our period. But greater numbers of graduates in the rectories and canonries[1] did not necessarily mean a more academic approach to the cure of souls, and a proportion of the unqualified unsuccessful candidates in the contest for the better class benefices probably found their ultimate place as curates to the graduates - especially those with higher degrees - who, finding more congenial work at the universities or in ecclesiastical or lay administration, would relinquish to these subordinates, with a stipend, the administration of the needs of the parishioners. Right to the end, moreover, (that is up to 1540) the graduates remained a minority among the incumbents of the Durham benefices. It is thus indisputable, however important the graduates may have been, that the bulk of the parochial work of the diocese was not undertaken by them.

(iii) The "connections" of the clergy.

Some of the incumbents received their jobs on the strength of their local standing, some by reason of their academic qualifications, some because they knew, or were related to, the right person at the right /

[1] Cf. table 13e.

right time. In the diocese of Durham, where most benefices were in the patronage of the church, the first two of these three reasons are the most usual and apparent; while the last is both difficult to establish, and, so far as we can judge, was not very frequently effective. Patronage could be exercised by the local nobility and gentry only at second hand by influencing the ecclesiastical patrons, usually corporate, in the issue of their letters of presentation, except, of course, in the 13 per cent of parochial benefices which were in direct lay gift. Chapter 4 has already illustrated the difficulty of proving the connection between the clerk, his lay sponsor, the ecclesiastical patron and the presentation, and has adduced some examples.[1] Unfortunately these examples of what was essentially a private and unofficial transaction are rare enough in the records, and it is not the purpose of the present section to re-examine such evidence as was presented at an earlier stage, but rather to attempt a more general estimate of the number of institutions which went to clergymen who can be shown to have had "connections" with patrons or with people who might have influenced the patrons. Relationships which established such a "connection" were usually those of servant to master, retainer to maintainer, client to sponsor or kinsman to kinsman. On the basis of the evidence which is available they may be divided into five main groups: first the papal clerks, the clergy whom we know from the records of their appointment or from some other source to /

[1] See above, pp. 270-279.

to have held positions in the papal household or in the curia; secondly clerks of the bishop of Durham; thirdly royal clerks; fourthly clerks of the chapels, households and estate administrations of the nobility; and fifthly clerks who were related to the most influential local families of the counties of Durham and Northumberland.

Between 1311 and 1540 there were - so far as it has been possible to discover - 33 institutions of papal clerks to benefices in the diocese of Durham, 166 institutions of episcopal clerks, 166 of royal clerks, 15 of nobles' clerks and 298 of members of the more important families; but the inclusion of an incumbent in one of these five categories does not exclude him from the others. There was, for example, no reason why a scion of a local baronial house such as that of Bertram should not be a member of the bishop's administration or of the royal administration; while a number of clerks served both the bishop of Durham and the king in the course of their careers.[1]

Nearly /

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[1] For example, John de Orreby, clerk of the exchequer and clerk of Bishop Bek (F.D.; Fraser, Bek, p. 403) and William de Westlee, king's clerk and temporal chancellor to Bishop Hatfield (C.P.R. 1350-54, p. 99; F.D.). It was by no means uncommon in the later middle ages for members of the household administrations of the nobles to transfer to the royal service. (Cf. Tout, Chapters, iv, pp. 152-153.)

The 15 "nobles' clerks" were, of course, usually members of the households and administrative staffs of the highest aristocracy such as the Nevilles or Percies. It was rare for a clerk to be designated the clerk of a knight or a squire in his letters of appointment: the one case which comes to mind is that of Thomas March, the priest of a local landowner, Robert Jackson, who was presented by the prior of Durham to the vicarage of Dalton-le-Dale /

Nearly all of the evidence on which the figures for papal, episcopal, royal and nobles' clerks are based is derived from records of appointment, and although the figures almost certainly underestimate the total of each group of clerks because the records are incomplete, this evidence, when it is available, is clear and reliable. With the family relationships of the last group we are on less secure ground. Usually it was necessary to select incumbents for inclusion among the relatives of important families simply on the basis of their surnames. North-country names are fairly distinctive and, especially in the earlier part of our period, this method of selection has much to recommend it; but it cannot pretend to complete accuracy. The name of each incumbent was checked against a list of 250 surnames of influential families in Durham and Northumberland compiled chiefly from the same sources as the statistics of the squirearchy given in chapter 1.[1] Again the aim was to select the families which, by reason of wealth, lands or status, might be in a position to bring pressure to bear on behalf of clerks- relatives or dependants - who were seeking preferment. For this reason the families of the gentry, the lesser nobility and those /

Dale at Jackson's request in 1435. (Loc. xxv, 24.) Probably few of the household chaplains of the gentry obtained parochial charges.

[1] See above, pp. 26-30. The sources mentioned were the list of 85 "chivallers" of the franchise of Durham who fought in the Battle of Lewes (Bishop Hatfield's Survey (S.S. xxxii, pp. xiv-xvi)), and four lists of the knights and important landowners of Northumberland in the years 1278, 1323, 1473, and 1509 (Hodgson-Hinde, A history of Northumberland, i, pp. 295-7, 303, 324, 339-40).

Table 14

Institutions of privileged groups of clergy to benefices classified according to their patrons.

	Papal clerks	Clerks of the Bishop of Durham	Royal clerks	Nobles' clerks	Relatives of the local gentry
Number of institutions to benefices in the gift of the Bishop of Durham	28	137	124	5	130
Percentage of total institutions to these benefices (1192)	2.3%	11.5%	10.4%	0.4%	10.9%
Numbers of institutions to benefices in the gift of the Priory of Durham	1	20	3	-	55
Percentage of total institutions to these benefices (371)	0.3%	5.4%	0.8%	-	14.8%
Number of institutions to benefices in the royal gift	-	-	5	1	5
Percentage of total institutions to these benefices (40)	-	-	12.5%	2.5%	12.5%
Number of institutions to benefices in the gift of lay patrons	2	4	18	1	44
Percentage of total institutions to these benefices (200)	1.0%	2.0%	9.0%	0.5%	22.0%

Number of institutions to benefices in the gift of the canons regular	-	2	1	-	24
Percentage of total institutions to these benefices (130)	-	1.5%	0.8%	-	18.5%
Number of institutions to benefices in the gift of the Bishop of Carlisle	-	-	7	1	6
Percentage of total institutions to these benefices (59)	-	-	11.9%	1.7%	10.2%

those of peerage rank have not been distinguished. Since, however, only 27 out of the 298 institutions of incumbents who belonged to the upper classes went to members of peerage families, it is justifiable to consider that conclusions obtained by analysing these 298 institutions as a single group are applicable chiefly to the ordained relatives of the lesser nobility and the gentry. Hence the final columns of tables 14 and 15 have been headed simply "relatives of the local gentry." Not all of the 250 families mentioned were represented among the Durham incumbents; indeed, the 298 institutions were divided between members of only 92 of them, many of these institutions being made directly by patrons of churches to their relatives. Given the fact that episcopal benefices were by far the most numerous in the diocese, it is not surprising to find - as is shown in table 14 - that the bulk of these clerks obtained churches in the bishop's gift; nevertheless the institutions of which they obtained the highest <u>percentage</u> were still those to benefices in lay advowson.

Almost inevitably, on account of the numerical preponderance of benefices in the gift of the bishop of Durham, most of the institutions of clerks in all five categories appointed them to episcopal churches and canonries. The first vertical column of the table shows that for the papal clerks the bishop's benefices formed practically the only class of preferment in the diocese[1] both /

[1] Figures for the distribution of papal clerks in Durham benefices should be compared with those for the types of benefice most affected by papal provisions - some of which were, of course, in favour of such clerks. Once again, the episcopal benefices received /

both obtainable and acceptable. In the second column, which shows the distribution of the bishop of Durham's own administrative officials and household chaplains, the very large number which the bishops appointed to their own benefices is not surprising. Most of the king's clerks also gravitated towards episcopal benefices; but they received a smaller proportion of the total institutions to episcopal benefices than of those to churches in the gift of the king or the bishop of Carlisle. The royal clerks also obtained 9 per cent of the institutions to churches in the gift of the gentry and magnates as against 10.4 per cent of the institutions to episcopal benefices. Their success in obtaining churches in the gift of the bishops of Durham and Carlisle was largely due to the royal right as feudal superior to present to all churches in the bishops' advowson during vacancies in the sees.[1] But many such clerks were collated by the bishops themselves, and it should not be forgotten that most of the bishops who held the see of Durham during the later middle ages were civil servants, royal ambassadors and heads of government departments. Their official connections followed them to the episcopal chair and some of their colleagues and servants received preferment at their hands.[2] The nature of the evidence /

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received well over eighty per cent. (See above, table 8, between pp. 302 and 303.)

[1] 66% of all royal presentations of clerks to Durham benefices were to those in the bishop's gift. (See above, loc.cit.)

[2] Among 14th century deans of Auckland we find John de Houton, who had been cofferer of the wardrobe in 1328 while Bishop Bury was keeper, John Maudyt, an astronomer and a member of Bury's literary circle, William de Westlee, a royal clerk who was also temporal /

evidence makes it impossible to reach any definite conclusions about the distribution among Durham benefices of the clerks attached to the households of the nobility. While it was common to find the royal servants designated "king's clerks" in the documents relating to their appointments to benefices, and while many of the royal, episcopal and papal clerks were men of sufficient importance to be easily traceable in other records; it is not possible to be certain that all of the clerks attendant upon the nobility have been distinguished and included in the statistics of table 14. The ministers of the magnates' private chapels, their clerks who celebrated private masses, must frequently, of course, have held no other benefices; while the more important nobles probably appointed their highest clerks to their lucrative benefices in Yorkshire and the south, and also had them appointed to southern benefices in the gift of ecclesiastical clients. There is reason to remember than even of the 15 institutions of nobles' clerks which have been traced, only 8 are accounted for in the table; and since the benefices of all patrons except certain religious houses[1] are included in the table, this means that nearly half of these institutions appointed the clerks to churches in the gift of such monasteries. As it is precisely these benefices the appointments to /

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temporal chancellor to Bishop Hatfield, himself the king's secretary, and Hugh de Westwick a royal judge but also temporal chancellor to both Bishops Fordham and Skirlaw. (See below, vol. 2, under Deanery of Auckland; and, for Bury's and Houton's careers at the wardrobe, see Tout, Chapters, vi, pp. 26, 31.)

[1] These were, in the diocese of Durham, houses of monks and nuns (excluding the priory of Durham) and hospitals; in other dioceses, houses of monks and nuns and of canons regular.

to which are the worst documented, it remains possible that the proportion may well have been higher.

The fifth group of incumbents which we are considering - relatives of the local gentry - is different from the other four inasmuch as the members of it are not distinguished by any connection based on professional or official status. They form therefore a considerably less homogeneous group; not only were their careers more variegated, not only were their ecclesiastical qualifications less restricted to the academic groove, but also, because our definition of the term gentry has been a wide one, the range of their social backgrounds was probably not much less than that of most of the clerks in the other four groups. In one other respect they are distinct from what we might call the "professional groups:" a much greater number of them were to be found in Durham benefices not in the gift of the bishop. While it is true that they received 130 institutions to episcopal benefices, they also received 55 to churches in the gift of Durham priory and 44 to benefices in the gift of the magnates. This meant that the percentage of total institutions to the benefices in lay gift which went to these clerks was 22 per cent - over double that of the total institutions to episcopal benefices which they obtained (10.9 per cent). Some of those who received benefices in lay gift did so upon the direct presentation of the patrons, their relatives;[1] others received churches in the gift of members of local gentry unrelated to them /

[1] Especially members of the families of Hadham, Heron and Whitfield, not very important patrons, each of whose direct patronage was confined to one benefice. (See above, pp. 268-269.)

them; while still others obtained benefices in ecclesiastical gift sometimes on the petition of their relatives.[1] That the majority should have become incumbents of the last type of benefice was practically a mathematical certainty, having regard to the fact that ninety-seven per cent of the benefices we are dealing with were in the gift of ecclesiastics. In this respect, therefore, the distribution of this group of clerks among the benefices followed a pattern roughly similar to that of the other classes of what might be called the privileged or specially qualified clergy; those clerks, that is to say, who could expect to have some special influence brought to bear in their favour in the quest for benefices. As we have already seen, the same clerks might belong to more than one of the groups distinguished for the purposes of table 14. Most of the papal, episcopal, royal - and even some of the nobles' - clerks were university graduates, and while this was not equally true of the clerical members of the local squirearchical class, at least 77 of the 298 institutions which they received went to men with degrees, from 32 out of the 92 families represented among them. Thus it is fairly safe to assume that between a quarter and a third of the "younger sons" of the local Durham and Northumberland lesser nobility and gentry who entered the church and who at one time or another received a local benefice took the trouble of attending a university and acquiring a degree - a not unworthy proportion, and one higher than the percentage of graduates among the Durham clergy as /

[1] See above, pp. 276-277.

as a whole (21.7 per cent). Yet as a group the clerks who belonged to the upper classes seem to have depended as much upon local connections as upon academic qualifications to get them their positions, and it is very noticeable that the patrons who most frequently presented them were exactly those most open to local influence: the priory of Durham, the local regular canons and the local lay patrons.

So far, most of the evidence has indicated that common trends were applicable to four of the five groups of clerks which we are considering, while the fifth - made up of clerks related to upper class families - was to some extent the exception. A somewhat similar situation is apparent in table 15, which attempts to analyse the institutions of these clerks during the three periods, 1351 to 1380, 1406 to 1435 and 1491 to 1540.

Table 15

Institutions of privileged groups of clergy, 1351-80, 1406-35, 1491-1540.

	Papal clerks	Clerks of the Bishop of Durham	Royal clerks	Nobles' clerks	Relatives of the local gentry
1351-1380					
Number of institutions	10	37	45	7	49
Percentage of total of institutions (559)	1.8%	6.6%	8.1%	1.3%	8.8%
1406-1435					
Number of institutions	2	33	13	1	56
Percentage of total of institutions (468)	0.4%	7.1%	2.8%	0.2%	11.0%

1491-1540					
Number of institutions	-	26	7	-	66
Percentage of total of institutions (422)	-	6.1%	1.7%	-	15.6%

As in table 14, the figures for institutions of papal and especially nobles' clerks are so small as to make it dangerous to draw definite conclusions from them. For what they are worth, however, they bear out the general trends of the other two groups of professional classes, the clerks of the king and the bishop of Durham. But while all show a general decrease in the number of institutions over the three periods, in the case of the bishop's clerks it is much more gradual than in those of the other three groups, particularly between the periods 1351 to 1380 and 1406 to 1435 when, indeed, the proportion of the total known institutions which went to episcopal clerks actually increased. The Statutes of Provisors and Praemunire in the late 14th century provide a ready explanation for the decline in the number of papal clerks; but it is less simple to account for the sharp drop in the figures for royal clerks. Two reasons may be suggested: first, the drying up of the stream of papal provisions to benefices in the south of England following upon the application of the Statutes may have increased the number of benefices available for royal clerks in the geographically more attractive parts of the country; secondly, since most of the royal clerks were appointed to benefices in the bishop's presentation, alterations in the exercise of episcopal patronage would decisively affect them. This subject has /

has been considered in an earlier section,[1] with regard to the numbers of effective papal provisions and royal presentations (as distinct from the total numbers of papal and royal clerks), and it was seen that in the 15th century the royal exploitation of the right to present to benefices falling vacant during vacancies in the bishopric was considerably curtailed. In the 15th and 16th centuries the royal clerks were probably a good deal more dependent on presentation to the episcopal benefices by the bishops themselves than they had been in the earlier part of our period, when institutions based upon royal presentations sede vacante were recorded even under the later years of the thirty-six years' long episcopate of Hatfield.[2] The upshot of this reduction in direct royal presentation to Durham benefices, and in the number of royal clerks appointed, was not, as might be supposed, an equivalent increase in the number of beneficed episcopal clerks. Although the percentage of the total institutions which went to the bishop's clerks rose very slightly between the periods 1351 to 1380 and 1406 to 1435, the absolute number seems to have declined a little. If, then, the episcopal clerks were in the early 15th century only just retaining the proportion of incumbencies which had been theirs in the middle of the 14th, how were those benefices being filled which were vacated as a result of the defection of the royal clerks?

The answer to this question would appear to be twofold: one part /

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[1] See above, pp. 304-306.

[2] E.g. Mag.Rep.Pont. 3a 12e, 4; R.H. f. 76v; C.P.R. 1370-4, p. 122.

part of it is supplied by tables 13b and 13c,[1] the other by the last column of table 15. During the two centuries before the dissolution of the monasteries the composition of what may be called the upper strata of the beneficed clerks in the Durham churches underwent a certain transformation. The clergy with the influential professional "connections" - clerks of the popes, bishops, kings and nobles - were relinquishing their interests in the benefices available in the diocese of Durham, and the rising "privileged classes" were the university graduates and the relatives of the local lesser aristocracy. Neither of these groups was new in the 15th century: they did not rise from nothing as the number of the administrative clerks declined. On the contrary, even in the 14th century, the graduates or relatives of the squirearchy considerably outnumbered the papal, episcopal, royal or nobles' clerks as incumbents of Durham benefices; while throughout the later middle ages many of the administrative and legal positions in church and state were themselves filled by graduates and by relatives of the lesser nobility and gentry: at no time were all or any of our classes of clergy exclusive of each other. Nevertheless, the tables show by the 15th century both an absolute decrease in the members of the professional groups holding Durham benefices and an increase in those incumbents who must have had nothing other than university degrees or connections with the more important local families to recommend them. At the same time the proportion /

[1] See above, p. 344.

proportion of institutions received by local clerks was increasing;[1] while during the two centuries which preceded the dissolution even the graduate incumbents in the diocese of Durham were predominantly of north of England origin.[2] There is an increasing tendency for Durham benefices to be held by men of local origin, and of comparatively humble origin - even those better placed and more lucrative benefices which were apt to be filled from outside of the clerical rank and file. The proportion of benefices held by clerks related to the gentry was increasing; but of institutions in favour of members of the three great northern aristocratic families of Neville, Percy and Clifford - the only northern families to acquire earldoms during our period - thirteen were made in the 14th century, seven in the 15th and none in the early 16th.

Explanations of this alteration in the composition of the ecclesiastical upper classes in the benefices have been suggested in terms of politics and of the policy followed by the chief patrons. It is no doubt also due in part to the fact that the values of the various benefices were changing throughout the period. The wealthiest parishes were not so evenly distributed in 1540 as they were in 1311. While concentrations of fairly lucrative churches were to be found on the banks of the lower Tyne and the Tees and generally in the south-east of the diocese by the early 16th century; many of the larger benefices of the north and west had suffered crushing /

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[1] See above, tables 12a and 12b,

[2] See above, table 13d,

crushing impoverishment.[1] In addition, the process of appropriation - completed, so far as the mediaeval diocese of Durham was concerned, during our period - had much reduced the actual value of several benefices to their incumbents.[2] Thus the average incumbent in the diocese of Durham was likely to be less well off financially in the early 16th century than in the early 14th, and although the pinch was most acutely felt by the local clerk who had no degree, influential relative or employer to promote his interests, some twinges also afflicted the ecclesiastical upper classes.[3] Royal clerks, papal clerks, clerks and relatives of the magnates - all those people, that is to say, who could benefit from patronage which had access to benefices in the south of England and abroad - found that there was a decreasing number of economic advantages in accepting benefices in the far north which would offset the obvious geographical disadvantages. But southern alternatives were much less frequently available to a local clerk with no qualifications except a degree; while they had never been available to unqualified members of families whose standing was entirely local: these clerks /

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[1] Cf. above, pp. 96-102.

[2] On the economic results of appropriation, see above, pp. 97-98.

[3] They were, indeed, felt even by that wealthy and powerful corporation, the priory of Durham (Script.Tres. App. pp. ccl-cclii) as well as by the parish incumbents.

clerks had perforce to take what was offered to them in the diocese of Durham.

Even if they were accepting the Durham benefices "faute de mieux", however, the increase in their numbers was of considerable significance. For there was an important parallel in secular affairs. Just as the clerks with the widest and highest connections were accepting fewer benefices in the diocese, to be replaced by men of chiefly local standing, so the practical administration of the north of England was passing from the hands of the southward-looking high nobility into those of the local gentry.[1]

Not only were the families of the lesser nobility and the upper middle classes assuming the predominant positions in ecclesiastical benefices and in civil administration, they were also taking up many of the important jobs in the administration and protection of the secular possessions of the church. In the diocese of Durham, where so many estates were in the hands of the church (mainly in those of the bishop and priory of Durham[2]), the control of their administration was of considerable importance in local politics and economics. Although it has not proved possible to make a systematic search of the records of the bishops of Durham and of the monasteries for evidence on this subject, the written oaths of fealty made during /

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[1] This development is fully discussed from the point of view of secular affairs in chapter 2, above, pp. 71-79.

[2] See map 2, where much of the palatinate area, including the whole of county Durham, Hexham, Norham, Bedlington and Tynemouth was in ecclesiastical possession.

during the 14th and 15th centuries to the prior and convent of Durham which are collected in Locellus xxviii[1] include many of those made by the laymen appointed by the monks to look after their secular interests. From this conveniently concentrated source, from a few documents in the other Locelli, and from entries in the royal, episcopal and monastic registers, it is possible to obtain some idea of the kind of people who were being appointed by the church to the sheriffdom of Durham, to the constabularies of episcopal castles, to stewardships of estates and manors, wardenships of forests and parks and other administrative positions both in the localities and in the households of the bishops and priors. Not only in the 15th and 16th centuries, but indeed during the whole of our period, we find the highest of these offices falling again and again into the hands of the local gentry and lesser nobility. Thomas Gray, knight, occurs as steward of Bishop Hatfield in 1353,[2] Sir John Heron as constable of the bishop's castle at Norham in 1381,[3] Robert Ogle, knight, as sheriff and constable of Norham in 1437,[4] William Claxton, armiger, as steward of the priory of Durham in 1477[5] and William Bulmer, armiger, in the same position in 1496.[6] All of them were members of families which appear /

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[1] A note on the Locelli will be found on p. 479.
[2] R.H. f. 14.
[3] C.P.R. 1381-5, p. 12.
[4] Loc. xxviii, 9.
[5] R.P. ii, ff. 171-171v.
[6] Ibid. iii, f. 41; cf. Script. Tres. App., no. ccxcix.

appear in one or other of the lists of local gentry which have been mentioned.[1] Out of 27 references to the wardenships and foresterships of the episcopal and priory parks and forests ranging throughout our period, most of them occurring in Locellus xxviii, 12 specify members of the squirearchy as holders of these offices; while the other 15 documents refer to officers belonging to local families of less standing. It is not without significance that when in 1504 a member of one of the greatest aristocratic families - William Percy, brother of the earl of Northumberland - was appointe to an office in the priory of Durham's local administration, it was not to the stewardship of an estate in county Durham or Northumberland but to that of Hemingbrough in Yorkshire.[2] The tendency, here as elsewhere, was for the aristocracy to look southwards, leaving the local affairs of the diocese to the gentry.

There is no evidence that this tendency reflected a conscious policy on the part of the greater families to surrender their interests north of the Tees in ecclesiastical benefices and in the administration of the church's estates. Sometimes junior members of these families accepted specific posts under the church, as in the case of William Percy, or general commissions to "maintain and protect" the interests of a monastery such as was given to Thomas Neville by the monks of Durham in 1446/7.[3] But the preoccupation of /

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[1] See above, p. 358, n.1.

[2] Script. Tres, App., no. cccxv.

[3] Durham Account Rolls, iii (S.S. ciii) p. 631.

of the heads of the families with national politics meant that as many of the family resources as they could muster were swung into the struggles for national supremacy. The day to day administration of even the royal offices in the north of England was thus increasingly carried out, as we have seen,[1] by members of the gentry. It was therefore natural that, being in power and being in addition on the spot, they should have had the influence necessary to obtain for themselves the best jobs in the church's secular administration and for their younger sons some of its best jobs among the local benefices. The church wanted laymen to protect its interests, therefore it gave them its jobs; there may have been, as often as not, no more to it than a general acceptance of this proposition. Indeed, if we consider the paucity of positive evidence that any considerable downright lay pressure was exerted on ecclesiastical patrons, it appears likely that presentations of relatives of the gentry were more often the result of a tacitly accepted balance of service and reward than of specific agreements - especially written ones.

A good deal of unspoken understanding between the laity - both nobility and gentry - and the church seems to have developed in the diocese of Durham during our period. The effect was, in the main, to free the spiritual activity of the church and the disposal of its ecclesiastical patronage from nearly all forms of direct /

[1] See above, pp. 82-83.

direct lay interference; while at the same time the church relied on the local gentry and nobility, if the latter was available, for the running of its estates and the general protection of its property and interests, in return, of course, for emoluments derived either from the profits of the estates or - as in the case of Thomas Neville mentioned above - from direct payments. Increasingly the bishop of Durham and the local religious houses acquired the custody of the local churches as the long mediaeval period of lay alienation and ecclesiastical appropriation reached its conclusion in the 14th century. Increasingly the church in the diocese came to make temporal as well as spiritual provision for the beneficed clergy as the right of direct presentation to all but a few churches came into its hands. By the late 15th century its undivided control over both benefices and incumbents was approaching completion.

There was, however, in the career of all tonsured clergymen, one step - or rather series of steps - other than presentation and the contest for benefices at which patronage of some kind was usually necessary. This was their ordination. In the early church there were three orders of clergy, those of bishop, priest and deacon: here we are concerned only with the two lower orders and also those preparatory orders - of first tonsure, acolyte and subdeacon - attainment to which soon became a necessary prelude to ordination to higher "grades." Later the order of subdeacon was included along with those of deacon and priest among the major orders. His orders were, in effect, the clergyman's certificate of his fitness to perform the spiritual duties of his calling; it

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was, for example, illegal for anyone not in priest's orders to have charge of a parish without some special dispensation.[1] The bishop was responsible for the ordination of clergy in his diocese; but he was authorised to permit the clerks of his jurisdiction to be ordained elsewhere by another bishop by the granting of letters dimissory, and large numbers of clerks from outside the diocese of Durham were ordained by the bishop on the authority of such letters. Ordination was conditional upon the candidate's satisfying the bishop or an archdeacon of his suitability in standards of education, moral character and, unless dispensed, legitimacy of birth. Needless to say, standards varied from place to place, from time to time, and from bishop to bishop; but in theory no one ought to have been admitted even to first tonsure who had not been confirmed, did not know at least the rudiments of the Christian faith, or was illiterate; while the examinations preceding the higher ordinations could be extremely exhaustive.[2]

In addition to satisfying the local ordinary about his spiritual, moral and intellectual condition, the candidate for orders had to possess a "title." This "title" amounted to a guarantee of a sufficient /

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[1] About 1237, the Constitutions of Cardinal Otto "declared that all vicars must be deacons at least on their institution and that within a year they must proceed to priestly orders." (Hartridge, A history of vicarages, p. 65, quoting Wilkins, Concilia, i, p. 651.)

[2] A useful summary of ordination in the diocese of Durham is given by Sir Thomas Duffus Hardy in his preface to R.P.D. iii, preface, pp. lxix-lxxxi.

sufficient income to maintain himself as an ordained clerk.[1] Although the value of the titles offered varied a great deal - between 30s. and 100s. during the episcopate of Bishop Bury for example[2] - the official minimum figure in the early 14th century seems to have been 5 marks (£3:6:8).[3] This coincides exactly with the sum laid down by the Council of Oxford in 1222 as the minimum stipend for a vicar,[4] which provides some support for Duffus Hardy's assumption that the value of the title to ordination kept pace, roughly speaking, with the minimum vicar's stipend.[5] Thus by the middle of the 14th century the figure was probably 6 marks and it may have risen to as much as £8 by the early 16th century.[6] The chances are that the candidate for orders was at least as thoroughly examined about the validity of his title as he was on the subject of his education and morals, for while it was difficult to bring a concrete case against the bishop who ordained a priest who later turned out to be a scoundrel, he was, by a decree of the Lateran Council of 1179, liable to support any clerk whom he had ordained /

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1 The clerk's letters of orders were, therefore, a valuable possession; in 1492, John Moresby, a priest, who "intendit, ut asserit, ad loca remota et incognita transire", deposited his letters with the prior of Durham for safe keeping. (Script. Tres, App. no. ccxcii.)

2 R.P.D. iii, preface, p. lxxxvii.

3 Ibid., p. lxxxi.

4 Wilkins, Concilia, i, p. 587.

5 R.P.D. iii, preface, p. lxxxviii.

6 Ibid., pp. lxxxviii-lxxxix.

ordained and who could not sufficiently maintain himself.[1] It was, of course, to meet the prospective ordinand's need to provide himself with a title that patronage entered into the process of ordination.

The title could come from a variety of sources; most simply, perhaps, it could come from possession of a benefice, and it could also be provided by the patrimony of the applicant if he had any. But in the diocese of Durham, at any rate, most of the candidates for orders received their titles from funds put up by lay and ecclesiastical patrons. Table 16 attempts an analysis of this patronage as it related to candidates for the three major orders of subdeacon, deacon and priest, in four periods each of which is covered by ordination lists in one of the extant episcopal registers. In Kellawe's register there are no ordination lists as such, although there are frequent records of certificates of ordination granted to individual clerks,[2] so that the lists covering nine of the twelve years of Bury's episcopate[3] are the first which have survived relating to the diocese of Durham. They record 43 separate ordination ceremonies, 21 of which were performed by Bishop Bury himself and 22 by substitutes, usually a suffragan bishop.[4] These lists provide the figures for our first period. The material for the /

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1 Ibid.; 11th Œcumenical Council, 1179, Canon 5 (Hefele-Leclerq, Histoire des Conciles, v, ii, p. 1092.)

2 R.P.D. i-ii, passim; iii, preface, pp. lxxvi-lxxx.

3 Ibid., pp. 106-207.

4 Orders could be conferred only by a bishop. (Cf. Hamilton Thompson, op.cit., p. 48.)

the second and third comes from the registers of Hatfield and Langley, the former recording 103 ordination ceremonies, of which only 6 were performed by the ordinary himself, the latter 141, of which 32 were performed by Langley in person. But both Hatfield and Langley occupied the see for over thirty years and, in order to provide figures for periods comparable with the nine years of Bury's episcopate, ten years, for each of which an apparently full quota of ordinations is recorded, have been chosen from the period 1353 to 1373,[1] and ten from the period 1416 to 1436.[2] The ordinations listed in Fox's register have not been used, because the register as it has descended to us is incomplete,[3] and it is therefore uncertain what proportion of the ordination records has been preserved. Tunstall's register, between 1529 and 1540, contains lists only under the five years 1531 to 1535;[4] twenty ordination ceremonies were carried out, however, all by the bishop in person, and these five years form our fourth and last period.

Although six ordination ceremonies in each year were provided for,[5] it is obvious that the number actually performed varied considerably from bishop to bishop and from year to year.[6] Ordination depended /

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1 R.H. ff. 92–113 passim.

2 R.L. passim.

3 S.S. cxlvii, introd., p. xxxiv.

4 R.T. ff. 6, 10v–13, 15–16, 17v–18, 20v, 21v–22, 23, 74v–76v.

5 Cf. R.T. (S.S. clxi) introd., p. xvii.

6 Orders conferred in Durham during nine years under Bury were noticeably more numerous than those recorded in ten years in each of Hatfield's and Langley's registers, although there were fewer ordination ceremonies. It may be that it was necessary to /

depended on the presence of a bishop, incumbent or suffragan; and thus, if neither was available, candidates might, if they could procure letters dimissory, proceed to another diocese for their orders. In other words, it should not be assumed that, because no ordinations were carried out in Durham between 1536 and 1540, no Durham clerks were ordained. Similarly, as table 16 will make clear, many clerks ordained by the bishops of Durham came, with letters dimissory, from other dioceses. In order to obtain a complete picture of the ordination of Durham clergy, it would be necessary to examine all the contemporary episcopal registers of England - certainly those of York province. But as a basis for estimating the operation of patronage in ordination, this table, compiled from the Durham records alone, may serve.

Table 16

Titles to Orders (Secular clerks).

(a) Title: Possession of a benefice.

Clerks of diocese Durham.

	1334x1345	1353x1373	1416x1436	1531-1535
Subdeacons	8	6	5	2
Deacons	6	5	5	-
Priests	9	5	3	3

to catch up with arrears from years prior to 1333 in the same way that Tunstall seems to have had candidates left over from the episcopate of the absentee Wolsey to ordain in 1531 (R.T. (S.S. clxi) introd., p. xvii), but in the absence of a register for Beaumont's episcopate this must remain a supposition. The mortality of the clergy during the Black Death no doubt also accounts in some measure for the fall in the number of ordinands between Bury's episcopate and that of Hatfield.

Clerks of other dioceses.

	1334x1345	1353x1373	1416x1436	1531-1535
Subdeacons	11	5	4	-
Deacons	12	13	1	-
Priests	14	10	1	-

(b) Title: Papal provision, grace or expectation.

Clerks of diocese Durham.

Subdeacons	2	3	-	-
Deacons	1	6	-	-
Priests	1	5	-	-

Clerks of other dioceses.

Subdeacons	4	-	-	-
Deacons	6	-	-	-
Priests	6	-	-	-

(c) Title: Bishop's recommendations and sponsorship.

Clerks of diocese Durham.

Subdeacons	-	-	1	-
Deacons	-	-	1	-
Priests	-	-	-	-

Clerks of other dioceses.

Subdeacons	2	-	-	-
Deacons	2	-	-	-
Priests	2	-	1	-

(d) Title given by other clergymen, usually beneficed.

Clerks of diocese Durham.

	1334x1345	1353x1373	1416x1436	1531-1535
Subdeacons	2	-	-	-
Deacons	-	2	-	-
Priests	1	1	-	-

Clerks of other dioceses.

Subdeacons	3	-	-	-
Deacons	4	1	-	-
Priests	3	2	-	-

(e) Title provided by a religious house.

Clerks of diocese Durham.

Subdeacons	8	32	71	74
Deacons	8	35	76	81
Priests	8	35	71	98

Clerks of other dioceses.

Subdeacons	39	11	35	-
Deacons	22	12	39	-
Priests	31	11	44	-

(f) Title provided by membership of an Oxford or Cambridge College.

Scholars of diocese Durham.

Subdeacons	-	-	4 Oxford	1 Oxford
Deacons	-	-	1 Oxford	1 Oxford 1 Cambridge
Priests	-	-	1 Oxford	1 Cambridge

Scholars of other dioceses.

	1334x1345	1353x1373	1416x1436	1531-1535
Subdeacons	-	-	1 Oxford	-
Deacons	-	-	5 Oxford	-
Priests	-	-	1 Oxford	-

(g) Title given as "patrimony" of the applicant - i.e. income from his secular possessions.

Clerks of diocese Durham.

Subdeacons	9	2	2	-
Deacons	5	6	1	-
Priests	3	4	-	-

Clerks of other dioceses.

Subdeacons	7	1	-	-
Deacons	3	1	-	-
Priests	12	1	1	-

(h) Title provided by a relative of the applicant.

Clerks of diocese Durham

Subdeacons	24	-	1	-
Deacons	21	3	-	-
Priests	20	4	-	-

Clerks of other dioceses.

Subdeacons	3	-	-	-
Deacons	4	-	-	-
Priests	2	2	-	-

(j) Title provided by a lay patron unrelated to the applicant.

Clerks of diocese Durham.

	1334x1345	1353x1373	1416x1436	1531-1535
Subdeacons	148	59	3	-
Deacons	120	71	1	-
Priests	109	71	1	-

Clerks of other dioceses.

Subdeacons	28	29	-	-
Deacons	22	22	5	-
Priests	36	17	4	-

(k) Title not given.

Clerks of diocese Durham.

Subdeacons	13	8	1	1
Deacons	9	4	-	-
Priests	7	4	-	-

Clerks of other dioceses.

Subdeacons	5	3	1	-
Deacons	6	2	-	1
Priests	20	1	-	-

(1) Percentages of titles from lay and ecclesiastical sources.

Secular clerks of diocese Durham.

Order	Source of title	1334x1345	1353x1373	1416x1436	1531-1535
Sub-deacon	Ecclesiastical title	9%	36%	92%	100%
	Lay title	85%	57%	7%	0%
	Unknown	6%	7%	1%	0%
Deacon	Ecclesiastical title	9%	36%	98%	100%
	Lay title	86%	61%	2%	0%
	Unknown	5%	3%	0%	0%
Priest	Ecclesiastical title	12%	36%	99%	100%
	Lay title	84%	61%	1%	0%
	Unknown	4%	3%	0%	0%
Average for above orders	Ecclesiastical title	10%	36%	96%	100%
	Lay title	85%	60%	4%	0%
	Unknown	5%	4%	0%	0%

(m) Percentage of titles from lay and ecclesiastical sources.

Secular clerks of dioceses other than Durham.[1]

Order	Source of title	1334x1345	1353x1373	1416x1436	1531-1535
Sub-deacon	Ecclesiastical title	58%	33%	98%	-
	Lay title	37%	61%	0%	-
	Unknown	5%	6%	2%	-
Deacon	Ecclesiastical title	57%	51%	90%	0%
	Lay title	36%	45%	10%	0%
	Unknown	7%	4%	0%	100%
Priest	Ecclesiastical title	40%	52%	90%	-
	Lay title	44%	45%	10%	-
	Unknown	16%	3%	0%	-
Average for above orders	Ecclesiastical title	52%	45%	92%	0%
	Lay title	38%	51%	7%	0%
	Unknown	10%	4%	1%	100%

[1] The percentages for the period 1531-1535 are included for the sake of completeness; but only one deacon from outside of Durham diocese was ordained between these dates.

Sections a to f of this table show the figures for titles derived from the church - for what in sections l and m have been called "ecclesiastical titles"; sections g to j deal with titles from secular sources - "lay titles". Perhaps the most striking contrast between the patronage of benefices and the patronage of titles lies in the position of the bishops of Durham (section c): the bishops seem to have felt that in dispensing the many benefices in their gift they had done enough towards the upkeep of their diocesan clergy, and had no intention of financing the ordinations as well. Titles from papal patronage (section b), from the generosity of other clergymen (section d) and from membership of university colleges (section f) account for comparatively few of the guarantees; while, without wholesale breach of the law that only ordained priests or deacons proceeding to the priesthood should occupy benefices with cure of souls, the figures in section a could hardly be expected to be much higher than they are, and many of them do, in fact, represent clerks hastening to due ordination upon induction to their benefices. Sections g and h indicate that, in the early 14th century at any rate, a fair number of better-off clerks were at the outset of their careers either supporting themselves or being supported by their families; but from Hatfield's episcopate onwards their number was insignificant.

The root of the matter, however, lies in sections e, j, l and m, the two former of which tabulate the titles financed by the principal groups of patrons, the lay families and the monasteries; while /

while the latter pair sum up, in their percentages, the main trends of patronage as it was divided between the laity and the clergy. Especially for the ordinands who were clerks of the diocese of Durham, there can be no doubt about these trends. In the 14th century the majority were financed directly by the laity; towards the end of the century, however, the growing number of titles provided by the clergy - chiefly the monastic houses - seems to have outstripped the number given by the lay families, and by the episcopate of Bishop Langley no less than 96 per cent of all the titles to the higher orders were, for secular clergy, supplied by the church; while in Tunstall's register all of the ordinands, with one possible exception, had "ecclesiastical titles." For the clerks who came from other dioceses the trend from lay to ecclesiastical titles is less marked. In the 15th and early 16th century, these clerks, equally with the natives of Durham, received their titles from the church; but even earlier a fairly large proportion of non-Durham ordinands was supported by the church, for - if we exclude from consideration the magnates of national importance, of whom there were few in the far north of England - the church had much wider connections and influence than the laity.

The gradual withdrawal from their positions of immediate influence upon the structure of the Durham clergy, which has already been observed in the lay patrons' policy of alienating advowsons to the monasteries and of seeking appointments south of the Tees for many /

many of their clerical protégés,[1] is also apparent in the development of their attitude to the ordinations. From supporting an average of 60 per cent of the local Durham candidates for orders in the episcopate of Hatfield, they had reduced their direct responsibility to that of maintaining a mere 4 per cent of the ordinands only half a century later under Bishop Langley.[2]

The ordination lists prove without question that the bulk of this relinquished responsibility was undertaken by the monastic houses. But this is not to say that the monks and nuns, canons and canonesses had to find all the money to meet their increased outlay from their normal income. Indeed it is doubtful if they could have done so in a period when the very number of their communities was diminishing[3] and their revenues were falling too steeply to be restored by means of appropriating the churches in their gift.[4] But as Professor Hamilton Thompson has pointed out, "Religious houses always had at their disposal trust-money for chantries committed to them by testators," and each of them would therefore "have money or securities in its keeping which would have enabled and required it to grant titles to applicants for orders."[5]

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1 See above, pp. 272-273.

2 See above, table 161.

3 See above, p. 113.

4 Script. Tres, App., no. ccxii.

5 Hamilton Thompson, op.cit., p. 143. Cf. Wood-Legh, Studies in church life in England under Edward III, pp. 94 et seq.

The later middle ages saw the inclusion of innumerable chantry bequests in the wills of middle-class merchants and landowners, to say nothing of the nobility, and frequently the endowment of the chantry and the duty of appointing the chaplains was placed by the testator in the hands of a religious house, especially if - as often happened - the chantry was established within the building. Professor Hamilton Thompson's suggestion is that the income from such endowments might be stretched on occasion to cover the titles of ordinands as well as the serving of the chantry. Sometimes the founder of the chantry specifically endowed the monastery with more than the estimated upkeep of the foundation, thus providing a clearly stated profit for the monks.[1] In Northumberland Robert de Herle was so determined to provide for the family chantries in the abbey of Blanchland and the church of Kirkharle that he first of all in 1348 donated to the canons of Blanchland a moiety worth 12 marks a year in Heddon-on-the-Wall on condition that they provided one of their number to serve the chantry in the church[2], and seven years later in 1355 he alienated to them the advowson of the church of Bolam to finance "chantries and other works of piety in the abbey for the souls of William de Herle and the faithful departed."[3] The priory of Durham itself figures on several occasions as the administrator of chantries founded by laymen, with the responsibility of /

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[1] Hamilton Thompson, op.cit., p. 95.
[2] C.P.R. 1348-50, p. 208; quoted in Wood-Legh, op.cit., p. 96.
[3] C.P.R. 1354-8, p. 289.

of appointing the chaplains.[1] In 1404/5 chaplains appointed to the chantry of SS. John the Baptist and John the Evangelist in the church of St. Oswald, Durham, recently founded by Gilbert, Richard and John de Elvet, were obliged to serve the prior and convent in this office;[2] while half a century earlier Reginald "dictus Mercator", a burgess of Durham, founded a chantry in St. Nicholas' church for the benefit of the almoner of the priory, who was of course responsible for the provision of chaplains.[3] In 1376 the canons of Alnwick became in effect trustees, not for a chantry but for the entire administration and revenues of a hospital, when Henry Percy received a royal licence to alienate to them the hospital of St. Leonard, Alnwick, and for them to appropriate it "for the support of alms, chantries, hospitalities and other works of piety of old ordained in the hospital."[4] While such appropriations and trusts did not necessarily increase the permanent revenues of the religious houses - although it seems very likely that some of them did - they would at worst place these communities from time to time in temporary possession of a certain amount of ready money which might enable them with some confidence to guarantee minimum titles to a few chosen candidates for ordination. As such they are the likeliest explanation of the ability of /

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1 E.g. Loc. x, 2, and P.C.R. iv, f. 169.
2 Cart. ii, ff. 280v-282; iv, ff. 214v-215.
3 Cart.Elem.Dunelm. ff. 76v-77 (pencilled foliation); cf. Loc. x, 24.
4 C.P.R. 1374-7, p. 267.

of many ecclesiastical groups to meet their extra commit ments when the laity all but ceased to provide titles for ordinands in the early 15th century.

By about the year 1400 it appears that the prospective clerk's surest method of achieving ordination in the diocese of Durham was to engage the interest of influential clergy or clerical corporations. At another stage in his career this was also his best method of acquiring a benefice. If, however, he wanted to be sure of a good benefice, some other academic or professional qualifications were desirable, although by no means essential, as the lists of incumbents prove. But the best benefices were in the gift of the bishop of Durham, and the bishop was precisely the patron most likely to be impressed by university degrees and administrative experience, especially in the royal government departments or in his own. After all, twelve out of the seventeen bishops who held office in Durham during our period were themselves primarily servants of the king - "senior civil servants," diplomats, ambassadors, and even, to use modern language, "ministers."[1] It was also noticeable in the preceding tables that the two groups of clergy who steadily increased their numbers in Durham benefices during the later /

[1] See the list of bishops in F.D., p. 153; entries in D.N.B., Le Neve, etc. Bishops Kellawe and Sever were monks, Beaumont, Neville and Dudley were aristocrats, but all the others owed their positions entirely to their success in the royal service. The bishopric of Durham was, of course, from its palatine situation, of peculiar importance to the king.

later middle ages were the graduates and the members of the local families of lesser nobility and gentry;[1] and nearly a third of the latter group were themselves graduates.[2]

But here once again it must be stressed that the present chapter has been dealing in the main with a minority - albeit a very large minority - of the Durham parochial clergy. The tables have illustrated in the main the position of the specially qualified and specially privileged clergy. For the rank and file, however - and over 54% of the known institutions between 1311 and 1540 went to clerks who seem to have had no special qualifications or connections[3] - patronage was probably a comparatively simple matter. They were usually local men,[4] with local knowledge and on the spot. They received the bulk of the appointments in the hands of both clerical and lay patrons which were not competed for by the higher classes of the clergy, and if they were more dependent on the church than on the laity for benefices it was simply because the church had more benefices to provide for.

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1 See above, tables 13c and 15.

2 See above, p. 363.

3 Calculated from the entries in volume 2, below. Out of 2,404 known institutions, 1,323 went to "unprivileged" clerks. This figure includes exactly 100 institutions of regular canons to churches appropriated to their monasteries. If they are counted as "privileged" which in a certain sense they were, a little more than half of the institutions during our period would have been - so far as can be shown - obtained by clerks without any special strings to pull.

4 Table 10a showed that 77.5% of institutions to benefices with cure of souls went to local clergy of the province of York, 40.2% to clerks from the diocese of Durham itself.

These clergy, the unprivileged in the quest for benefices, formed the largest group among the incumbents, and since, so far as we know, they were rarely non-resident, it was primarily with them that the parishioners of the diocese came into contact. In their hands lay the prime responsibility of communicating to the laity the church's moral and theological precepts. They were not, however, sharply distinguished from many of the incumbents in what we have called the privileged classes. For example, of the two largest groups into which these classes have been divided, the university graduates and the members of the local families of gentry, the vast majority of the former and, necessarily, nearly all of the latter were of local origin. Most of the graduates were simply higher up the educational ladder than the unprivileged clerks; while the relations of the local squires, successful farmers, small-scale industrialists and merchants were to varying extents higher up on the social and economic scales. Members of all these groups were to be found in most of the benefices in the diocese.

In possession of the most valuable benefices, however, and not as a rule in any of the others, were to be found members of more exclusive groups of clergy which nevertheless contained some relatives of the local gentry and a great many graduates including a large number of those with higher degrees. Among such clergy were the majority of the papal clerks, royal clerks, the administrative and household staffs of the bishops of Durham and Carlisle and a few of /

of the lay magnates, and the senior university graduates. Many if not most of them were frequently absent, holding wealthy benefices in other dioceses and important jobs in Rome, in London, at the universities and elsewhere. They appear usually in the lists of incumbents of the two archdeaconries, the deaneries of the collegiate churches - especially that of Auckland - the canonries and prebends, and some of the wealthiest rectories in the gift of the bishop of Durham, such as Bishop Wearmouth, Houghton-le-Spring, Haughton-le-Skerne, Stanhope and Whitburn; many also held the churches of Brancepeth, in the gift of the earl of Westmorland, and Rothbury, to which the bishop of Carlisle presented.[1] Several were pluralists on a large scale and some exchanged their benefices inside and outside of the diocese with dizzying rapidity, which means that estimates of their numbers based upon the institutions they received are somewhat exaggerated. Even so, these form a small proportion of the total institutions to the benefices which we have been considering. Although the clerical "upper classes" were to be found in a considerable number of local churches, the diocese of Durham could not provide the kind of benefice which above all attracted them, because it had no large cathedral chapter combining profitable canonries and prebends for secular clerks with some constitutional influence upon episcopal elections and policy.[2] This /

[1] See below, vol. 2, under the churches mentioned.

[2] It is noticeable that most of the treatises on such subjects as the influence of papal provisions and the influence of aristocratic pressure on ecclesiastical patronage concentrate to a considerable /

This is a point which must not be overlooked when estimating the influence of these clerks upon the church in Durham diocese. If they wanted to bring pressure to bear upon the bishop they had to do so privately or by obtaining positions in his household, which might just as likely be in London as in the manor of Bishop Auckland. And such of them as were not clerks of the bishop entered upon their institutions into the enjoyment of some of the diocese's most valuable benefices, but not necessarily into positions of any special influence. In short, the diocese of Durham, while offering a not altogether unworthy number of wealthy benefices to the higher clergy, could not eliminate certain disadvantages which might divert many such clerks to more important positions further south.

For these reasons among others which have already been indicated, the members of the church's ruling classes who had accepted Durham benefices formed a very small minority of the diocesan clergy. In view of the attention which tends to focus upon the higher clergy, whose careers are by far the best documented in the surviving records, it is very important to remember this. The structure /

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considerable extent upon the cathedral chapters. (E.g. Barraclough, op.cit., pp. 43-44, 54-60.) Out of 534 provisions in the diocese of Osnabrück between 1305 and 1418, 332 were distributed between the cathedral chapter, collegiate churches, and the bishopric itself, to which 5 were directed. (Nichus, Die päpstliche Ämterbesetzung im Bistum Osnabrück, 1305-1418, Osnabrück, 1940; quoted from the review in Revue Historique ccvii, Jan.-Mars, 1952, p. 272.) "Canonries," as Maitland remarks, "were the staple commodity of the papal market." (F. W. Maitland, Roman canon law in the Church of England, p. 67, note 2.)

structure of the beneficed clergy in the diocese of Durham may be compared to a pyramid, the high administrative clerks forming a small apex, the more humble graduates and members of the local middle class families an important central section, while the wide base is formed by local north of England clerks with no special qualifications or position, who were the usual incumbents of the majority of the parochial churches. The cure of souls in the parishes, like the everyday administration of northern English government, was essentially a local affair.

Part 2. The clergy and the cure of souls.

The chief aim of this thesis has been to examine the interaction of local conditions, patronage and clerical place-hunting in determining the social, economic and educational background of the secular clergy in the diocese of Durham, and hence to estimate the nature of that background. A further question has some claim to be answered, however, in order to round off the picture of these clergy: it is, in simple terms, how well, after obtaining presentation, institution and induction to their benefices, did they do their job? How well - to concentrate on the principal duty of all the clerks we have been considering apart from the canons of the collegiate churches - was the cure of souls maintained in the Durham and Northumberland parishes?

Something has already been said in general terms about the life /

life of the resident parish clergy,[1] and in greater detail about their education.[2] But when an attempt is made to probe at all deeply into the life and work of the clergy in their parishes, the limitations imposed by the nature of the surviving evidence make themselves all too apparent. In the first place it is badly balanced; it tells us a considerable amount about certain individuals, most of whom belong to groups of the clergy who have been called "privileged" in the preceding section, but practically nothing about the majority of the incumbents. Secondly, much of it is rather negative. As so often happens, the evil that men do has lived after them, and the good is certainly not buried in the archives of the bishops and priory of Durham. We hear of plurality, of absentee incumbents, of decaying churches, and of a variety of the human vices and delinquencies into which various clerks were alleged to have fallen. We may be sure that all these things happened on occasion; the difficulty is to determine how often.

There is of course one group of records which normally presents such members of the clergy as it covers in the best possible light; namely, their wills. A number of the wills of both laymen and clerks from the diocese of Durham has been preserved in the diocesan registry at Durham, in Somerset House, in the Lambeth Palace Library and in the registry at York.[3] Time has not permitted the undertaking /

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[1] See above, pp. 46-55 passim.

[2] See above, pp. 52-53, 335-355.

[3] Selections from the wills at Durham and York which cover our period are printed by the Surtees Society in Wills and Inventories, pt. /

taking of an exhaustive search of the numerous registers themselves;[1] but from the clergymen's wills published by the Surtees Society it is possible to obtain some idea of the standard of living of at any rate the more prosperous clergy, most of them graduates, administrative clerks, lawyers, or clients of the magnates.[2]

Apart from the normal provision for their burial and the appropriate services and for the passing on of personal possessions - mainly clothing and furniture - usually to relatives, the bequests in at least some of the wills show that the testators must have been relatively wealthy men. Very noticeable in this respect is the frequent occurrence of bequests to servants. In 1407 Thomas Weston, archdeacon of Durham and rector of Sedgefield - hence a pluralist - left £20 to Richard his "servant and chamberlain" and 20 marks to his other servants. He was, indeed, exceptionally well /

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pt. 1 (S.S. ii), Testamenta Eboracensia, vols. 1-6 (S.S. iv, xxx, xlv, liii, lxxix, cvi); while abstracts of most of the north of England wills in Somerset House and Lambeth Palace are printed in North Country Wills, vol. 1 (S.S. cxvi).

[1] The first of the six volumes of Testamenta Eboracensia contains selections from no less than fourteen MS. volumes in the York Registry. (Preface, p. viii.)

[2] E.g. Magister Alan de Newark, archdeacon of Durham, advocate in the consistory court of York (S.S. ii, pp. 51-54); Robert de Wyclyf, temporal chancellor and receiver general of Bishop Hatfield (ibid. pp. 66-68); William de Newport, rector of Bishop Wearmouth and client of the Percies, who are beneficiaries of the will (ibid. iv, pp. 80-82); Roger de Kyrkby, vicar of Gainford, client of the earl of Warwick (ibid. ii, pp. 54-56; cf. R.H. ff. 156v, 162-3).

well off;[1] but even a clerk of moderate substance such as Ralph de Bromley, vicar of Norton, who in 1415 distributed only a few marks in special bequests, was still evidently the master of three servants.[2]

Although the bequests of money are sufficiently impressive,[3] it is from the small libraries or even single books left by some of the incumbents that the most useful picture can be obtained of their attitude towards intellectual and spiritual matters and thus, to some extent, of how seriously they took their job. Robert de Rypon, preacher and moralist, and sub-prior of Durham in the early 15th century, quotes from canon law to catalogue what Dr. Owst calls "the mediaeval preacher's essential library ... 'The books which it is necessary for priests to study and know are (in addition to Holy Scripture) the Books of the Sacraments, the Lectionary, the Antiphoner, the Baptisterium, the Compotus, the Canones Poenitentiales, and Homilies throughout the year for Sundays and Festivals ...' And if the priest's or 'curate's' knowledge of any single one of these is lacking, hardly is he worthy of the name of priest."[4] All this bears /

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1 S.S. ii, pp. 45-47.

2 Ibid. pp. 58-59.

3 Apart from the terms of Thomas Weston's will, already mentioned, Thomas Walkyngton, rector of Houghton-le-Spring, left 20 marks to the poor, sundry small sums to friars and gilds, and £48 as scholarships to take his three chaplains to a university - an interesting sidelight on the financing of education. (Ibid., pp. 49-51.)

4 G. R. Owst, Preaching in medieval England, pp. 28-29, quoting from the MS. of Robert de Rypon's homily collection in the British Museum (MS. Harl. 4894) and from C.J.C. Decretum, I, dist. xxxviii, cap. 5.

bears a little of the stamp of the outside critic - Rypon did not after all have to look after a parish as well as preach - and it is reminiscent of Mr. Darcy's and Miss Bingley's inventory of the essential attributes of the accomplished woman in Pride and prejudice, to which, it will be remembered, Elizabeth made the sensible rejoinder, "I am no longer surprised at your knowing only six accomplished women. I rather wonder now at your knowing any."[1] None of the printed 14th and 15th century wills of Durham clergymen reveal them as the possessors of many of the items quoted, although John Hovyngham, archdeacon of Durham, seems to have possessed more than one copy of the Bible, since in his will, drawn up in 1417, he left his better copy (Bibliam meam meliorem) to Thomas Dale, a chaplain;[2] he also bequeathed two missals. On the other hand, the books mentioned by Robert de Rypon were strictly the technical tools of the priest's job, which might have been expected to be found as part of the equipment of any church,[3] so that there was the less need for the clerks themselves to possess them. Out of eighteen books listed in six of the printed Durham clergymen's wills of the early 15th century,[4] six were common religious and instructional works /

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1 Jane Austen, Pride and prejudice, vol. i, chap. 8. (p. 39 in vol. 2 of the Oxford edition of the Novels.)

2 S.S. cxvi, pp. 18-19.

3 A list of books handed over to the collegiate church of Bishop Auckland on behalf of Bishop Fox in 1499 is printed in S.S. cxlvii, pp. 93-96, and there is an inventory of the books in the hospital of St. Edmund the Confessor, Gateshead, in S.S. ii, p. 22.

4 Ibid. ii, pp. 46, 55, 77, 83-84; iv, p. 279; cxvi, p. 18.

works such as the Legenda Aurea and the Gemma Ecclesiæ (sic); there were also four breviaries, two missals, one Bible, one book of sermons, a text and a treatise of canon law, one patristic commentary - Chrisostom on St. Matthew's Gospel - and a work by the pro-papal controversialist, Egidius Colonna. But perhaps the most interesting is the only one which strays from the straight and narrow path of religion and the church, a French romance called Launcelot (unum librum gallicum vocatum Launcelot) bequeathed by Thomas Hebbeden, dean of Auckland, to Isabella Eure, a member of the Durham family of landowners and early mine operators,[1] in 1435.[2] It is interesting to know that at least one of the local clergy was prepared to take time off from his professional reading and was abreast of courtly literature. Hebbeden, who seems to have been a local man, was also the owner of the book by Egidius Colonna; and he is in fact the only one of the clerical testators - leaving out of account the famous Durham prelate-scholars such as Bishop Bury and the monks Uthred of Boldon and Thomas Wessington - whose books as revealed by the printed wills reflect any considerable breadth of interest. We cannot, however, judge a clergyman's interests entirely on the basis of the books he personally possessed, for books were hard to come by in the days before the printing press; and in addition to the standard literary equipment of every church, which /

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[1] See above, p. 13.

[2] S.S. ii, p. 84.

which has already been mentioned, many of the larger monasteries and collegiate churches possessed considerable libraries from which borrowing was permitted.[1] But so far as this evidence goes, it tends to show that the book-owners among the beneficed clergy did not look far beyond the tools of their trade, and even of these they tended to confine themselves to the most lightweight. Nevertheless, the late mediaeval popular religion was essentially a thing of moral precepts illustrated and driven home by simple and vivid anecdote or analogy - even by supersitition - and it is very likely that a parson would find that the legendary hagiology of the Golden Legend would react more forcibly upon his congregation than the subtlety of the Fathers. A not improbable conclusion is that the average priest of some education and means thriftily acquired books which were of simple practical use in his calling and which combined some entertainment with instruction; while leaving the assembling of weightier material to the larger libraries, the wealthy, and the serious scholars, who would mostly be found at the universities.[2]

It is true, of course, that the wills which have been considered have been those of the upper strata of the beneficed clergy, the lawyers, administrators and graduates, who held the best of the Durham benefices. There is an almost total lack of full, direct or /

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[1] Cf. Catalogues of the Library of Durham Cathedral from the Conquest to the Dissolution (S.S. vii) passim.

[2] Pantin, op.cit., chapters 9 and 10, deals with the 14th century manuals of instruction for parish priests and with contemporary religious and moral treatises in the vernacular.

or widespread evidence for the standards of the clerical rank and file who held most of the vicarages and smaller rectories, to say nothing of the chapelries and less exalted positions. Probably there was a substantial basis of fact for the charge of ignorance, laziness and negligence brought against the parish clergy as a whole by Rypon in Durham and by others like him all over Western Europe; but it is impossible to be sure of how substantial it was. Not only were the clerks blamed for taking no steps to improve themselves, but also, according to Rypon, the ecclesiastical authorities who were responsible for examination of each candidate for ordination had permitted a disastrous lowering of standards or had even neglected their duty altogether.[1]

One thing seems fairly certain: there was little original preaching carried out by the parish clergy, perhaps not even by the best educated of them. Their sermons, if given, were probably read straight out of a manual of sermons, such as the one which John Hovyngham, the dean of Bishop Auckland, bequeathed to Thomas Dale in 1417,[2] and it is not to be expected that such routine discourses could compete in attraction with, for example, the Sunday sermons of the Durham monks in the cathedral or one of the city churches, which were preceded by processions through the streets.[3] The monks and the friars were par excellence the preachers of the middle /

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[1] Owst, op.cit., p. 30, quoting Rypon collection of homilies, f. 209.

[2] S.S. cxvi, p. 18.

[3] Owst, op.cit., p. 52, quoting Rites of Durham (S.S. cvii) pp. 46, 104, etc.

middle ages, and in Bishop Kellawe's register there is even a record of an indulgence granted to those who attended the sermons of the Augustinian friar, William de Lincoln.[1] Nor, when the friars came, did they confine themselves to preaching; they also turned their attention to the confessional and the burial of the dead, thereby, incidentally, usurping some of the dues normally paid to the parish priests.[2] While at first the bishops no doubt welcomed their help in bringing religion to the people, it had become apparent by the 14th century that not only were they drawing the biggest audiences as preachers but as confessors they were attracting large numbers of the wealthy upper classes, many of whom wished to be buried in the friary precincts.[3] While it is true that regulations were soon produced to control their activities in the parishes, making their operations conditional upon the licence of the bishop and the invitation of the incumbent,[4] and while the use made of the friars as preachers and confessors varied considerably from one episcopate to another;[5] the fact is inescapable /

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1 R.P.D. ii, p. 778.

2 Cf. Knowles, Religious orders, p. 184.

3 Ibid.

4 Cf. Owst, op.cit., p. 72.

5 In Durham, for instance, Bishop Hatfield issued numerous licences to the friars, chiefly to act as confessors (e.g. R.H. ff. 39v, 40, 42, 42v, 43, 46, 81, 82, 117, 119, 152, 168, 169v, 170), but Bishop Tunstall issued only one - for preaching - between 1529 and 1540. (R.T. f. 7v.)

able that the popularity enjoyed by both friars and monks as preachers[1] and by friars as confessors must have been both a discouragement to the diligent parish incumbent and an incitement to inactivity for the indolent. Indeed one of these diligent incumbents - diligent enough at any rate to be one of the very few of his kind to leave a collection of written sermons - has admitted as much, and it is worth while to repeat his words here, although they have already been printed by Dr. Owst:

> And (=if) a bishoppe or a doctoure stond up to preche the worde of God, muche pepull will drawe thetherwarde to here hym; and ȝiff he repreve vices and synne, the peple will not gruche never a dele aȝeyns hym, ne thei will not forȝett is wordes. But lat a sympull preste as I am seth the word of God to you, and ȝe sett no price thereby ... Thus ffareth grett mens wordes now adayes, thei ben taken grett hede of, and pore mens wordes ben sett on syde.[2]

Thus it may be that the local parish priests had some excuse for the defects in their preaching habits, and that the monks, friars and travelling preachers were stealing their thunder. It is arguable, moreover, that the primary duties of the parish priests were the administration of the sacraments and the visiting of their parishioners in order to help them individually in spiritual affairs; while preaching was an "extra" which might be left to outsiders. The difficulty was that it was in these outlying hill parishes which were unlikely to be visited often, if at all, by itinerant preachers /

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[1] Rivalry not only between the parish clergy and the friars, but also between the friars and the monks, is apparent in Hatfield's mandate prohibiting without licence and invitation the preaching in Durham churches of all save the incumbents and the monks of the Cathedral (Script. Tres, App. no. cxv.)

[2] Owst, op.cit., p. 21, quoting Brit.Mus. MS. Roy.18.B.xxiii, fol. 75.

preachers that the clerks least capable of preaching their own sermons were likely to be beneficed.

There appear in the registers entries which show that in other matters besides preaching the lack of proper instruction, particularly in the rites and services of the church, but sometimes in the rudiments of an ordinary education, was preventing some of the lower grade parish clergy from properly carrying out their duties. In 1379, for example, John Rose, a parish chaplain of Stranton in county Durham, had to receive dispensation from Bishop Hatfield upon his confession that he had married Robert Raa and Elizabeth, his wife, without the publication of banns. He pleaded that he had intended no contempt of the church and had erred entirely through ignorance (ex sola simplicitate sua).[1] Over a century later, in January 1496/7, Richard Nykke, vicar-general and official to Bishop Fox had to warn John Wotton, a chaplain, that he must not officiate again within the diocese of Durham until he had been instructed in grammar.[2] It must be stressed, however, that, so far as is shown by the evidence which has survived, these remain isolated cases, and although the probability - in view of the strictures of Robert de Rypon - is that there were far too many like them, for some of which the records have perished and in some of which the delinquents simply got away with it, yet this must remain a /

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[1] R.H. f. 166v. In February, 1352/3, Hugh Hogg, another parish chaplain, was dispensed after confessing to a similar error. (Ibid. f. 10v.)

[2] S.S. cxlvii, p. 45.

a probability rather than a proven fact.

In most respects, indeed, the picture which remains to us of the lower parish clergy - chaplains, curates and many of the vicars - is an indistinct one, and it is at its darkest precisely at the point where most light needs to be thrown, namely on the day to day pastoral work of the priests: their visiting of the sick, their guidance on spiritual matters given individually to their parishioners and in general their teaching by example as distinct from pulpit homily.[1] For in the last resort the parish clergy must be judged on their success or failure in this pastoral work, of which scarcely a record is left.

As we have seen, rather more is directly known about the better placed incumbents, the holders of the wealthier benefices who usually had special qualifications or connections with the patrons. From the wills of some of these clerks, which have been quoted, it seems likely that there were certain conventions to which most of them adhered or at any rate paid lip service. Whatever the vices they may have practised and whatever the duties of their calling which they may have neglected, there were certain surface standards of behaviour and certain mental and moral criteria which were accepted by the vast majority.

First and foremost, these standards were based upon the tenets of /

[1] According to Dr. Owst (op.cit., p. 7) "stress is laid in the current treatises on the fact that before all else deeds and example of life speak as loud if not louder than words."

of Christianity as interpreted by the early Fathers, the doctors of mediaeval Christendom and the Church of Rome. They were also, however, to some extent materialistic standards - even, to use Marxist terminology, bourgeois. The church taught the efficacy and virtue of good works and charity; but before you can perform good works and dispense charity you have to amass a certain amount of the goods of this world to utilise for good and to dispense for charity. From this point of view, at least, the church approved - even indirectly encouraged - the acquisition of property; and indeed in the 14th century it was swift to act against those sections of the Franciscan Order whose programme advocated clerical poverty.[1]

The wills of the better-off incumbents show that they had acquired property of the same kind and often quantity as many of the laymen. William de Newport, rector of Bishop Wearmouth, had at least five horses to dispose of in his will of 1 May, 1366, not to mention a modish wardrobe which said little for his observance of the rules of sobriety in clerical garb.[2] Master Thomas /

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[1] D. L. Douie, The nature and the effect of the heresy of the Fraticelli, chapter 6, pt. 1, passim.

[2] S.S. iv, pp. 81-82. Another stylish wardrobe was that of Roger de Kyrkby, vicar of Gainford in the early 15th century. (Ibid. ii, p. 56, quoting R.L. f. 57.)

Thomas Hebbeden's bequest to his nephew, John Hothom, in June, 1435, of "gladium meum et unam integram armaturam"[1] reminds us that even a clergyman might require on occasion some means of self defence, and no doubt this was especially true in the turbulent north of England; only a few months earlier, Robert Wynkethley, the rector of Longnewton, had been assaulted and fatally wounded.[2]

While such bequests attest the temporal prosperity of many of these clerks, the disposal of their goods and wealth, outside of bequests to their families, servants and executors, was normally designed to benefit the church or charity. Bequests of money for the foundation of chantries, to monks and friars for the burial of or prayers for the testator, to churches for building, repair or furnishing - such clauses recur with regularity in most of the wills to which reference has been made. At the same time, communion cups and censers of silver and gold were bequeathed to favoured clergy,[3] and, as we have seen,[4] Thomas Walkyngton, rector of Houghton-le-Spring, was enlightened enough to bequeath money to send three of his chaplains to university. These were the good works which for comfortably-off clerks as well as for laymen were to be their excuse for their riches and their passports to paradise.

The generous bequests to relatives are evidence of the degree of family solidarity which existed especially in the middle and upper /

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[1] S.S. ii, p. 84.
[2] R.L. ff. 216v-217.
[3] E.g. S.S. ii, pp. 45-47; 49-51.
[4] See above, p. 399, n.3.

upper classes even between lay and clerical members. Among the beneficed clergy of the diocese of Durham it was not altogether uncommon for one member of a family to succeed another in the possession of a benefice. In 1316 an outstanding example occurred when Gilbert de Sandale was presented to the rectory of Simonburn, which was in the royal gift, by a letter from his uncle, John de Sandale, the king's chancellor and newly elevated bishop of Winchester, and the retiring incumbent of the rectory of Simonburn itself.[1] The register of Bishop Hatfield provides several examples of probable family successions to benefices, such as the succession of Peter de Belgrave to John de Belgrave's prebend in the collegiate church of Norton in 1351, and of John de Westwyk to the prebend of Tanfield in Chester-le-Street on the resignation of Hugh de Westwyk in 1379. This register also contains the record of John Appleby's exchange of the rectory of Rothbury and a prebend in Norton for the rectory of Caldebek and the mastership of Coupmanlandbrygg Hospital, both in the diocese of Carlisle, with John Appleby, Junior, who was almost certainly his son.[2] It is not known whether the father had defied the canon law against the marriage of clerks in holy orders[3] or whether the son was born out of wedlock and subsequently dispensed /

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[1] C.P.R. 1313-17, p. 555. The letter was a testimonial of the king's precept of presentation.

[2] R.H. ff. 6, 164. For the relationship between the two John Applebys and Thomas Appleby, bishop of Carlisle, the son of the elder and the brother of the younger, see below, vol. 2, under Rothbury.

[3] Cf. C.J.C.Decretal.Gregor.IX. Lib.III.Tit.3.

dispensed; but there is no direct evidence in the registers of marriage among the beneficed clergy, although a reference is made to a clerk called Adam de Byllyngham and Alice, his wife, in 1353.[1] Thus while there may well have been a certain number of married clerks among the chaplains and curates especially in the remoter areas in the north and west, there were few if any among the beneficed clergy with whom this thesis deals.[2] On the other hand it is quite certain that not a few of them kept female servants who acted as concubines - a result of the church's official ban on marriage;[3] and in the episcopal registers several warnings and prosecutions for fornication are recorded.[4] From the records which have survived, however, there is no evidence of a catastrophic decline in the sexual morality of the clergy such as is occasionally suggested in the more sensational histories of the pre-Reformation period.

To sum up on the more respectable family relationships, it appears /

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1 Cart. iv, f. 218-218v.

2 Robert Watton resigned the prebend of Medmesley in Lanchester upon his marriage in 1410. (R.L. f. 37.)

3 The canon law seems to have been more concerned to avoid the scandal which might follow from clerical concubinage than to extirpate the sin itself. A clerk is not to be excluded from office on account of concubinage unless the sin is notorious - i.e. commonly known, legally confessed or proved by incontrovertible evidence. (C.J.C.Decretal. Lib.III,Tit.2, c.10.) Beneficed clergy shall not lose their benefices unless, having been warned for concubinage, they do not desist, in which case they shall be suspended, and, if they still do not mend their ways, deposed. (Ibid., c.4.)

4 E.g. R.H. ff. 4v, 20, 175v-176v; R.L. f. 38.

appears that the feeling for the family may have had an occasional effect upon the actual succession to benefices, in addition to its more straightforward expression in legacies and chantry provisions. Naturally the benefices which were affected most were those, such as Ford rectory, which were in the gift of a local family which presented its own members to the living; but examples have been quoted of the succession of relatives to benefices which were not in the gift of lay patrons. It is possible that the most important general result of the local family ties of the clergy was to link them more closely to the area in which they were serving their cures. The stronger the local ties of the incumbents, the less likely they were to indulge in long periods of absenteeism. To some extent, that is, the family relationships of the clerks - and especially of those in the higher classes who were most tempted to absent themselves from their benefices - to some extent these relationships had a direct bearing upon the problem of non-residence.

Undoubtedly the absence of incumbents from their parishes was one of the most serious obstacles to the proper functioning of the parochial clergy of the mediaeval church.[1] It may be questioned whether the clergy were good or bad at performing the pastoral, confessional and ceremonial duties of their office; but before this question can even arise, it has to be established that they were at least present in their parishes to perform them. It is all very well to show that 21.7 per cent of the total of known institutions to /

[1] Owst, op.cit., pp. 43-44.

to benefices in the diocese of Durham went to graduates;[1] but before we can estimate the benefits which their learning might confer upon the people of the diocese, we must find out how many of these graduates were normally in residence and how many were absentees, serving their cures by deputies. In other words, the essential preliminary to any estimate of the quality of the work done by the parochial clergy is the establishment of the number of them who did the work in person.

Fortunately, the entries in the episcopal registers which either state or imply a case of non-residence are sufficiently complete to form a rough statistical basis for an assessment of the extent of absenteeism. Most of these entries are of four types: first, the licences for non-residence, usually granted for a specified number of years by the bishop to a clerk who proposed to leave his benefice in order to study at a university or to serve a prelate, a monastery, a noble, the king or the pope;[2] secondly, the dispensations for plurality which authorised the recipient to hold more than one benefice with cure of souls, a privilege which naturally involved absenteeism from at least one benefice at any given time;[3] thirdly, warnings to absentee incumbents to reside or summonses to answer /

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[1] See above, table 13.

[2] E.g. R.P.D. iii, pp. 508, 520-521; R.H. f. 68. Although usually granted by the bishop, such leave of absence was occasionally obtained directly from the pope. (C.P.L. v, p. 25.) The figures for Durham licences will therefore be taken from both episcopal and papal records.

[3] Such dispensations were usually granted by the pope. (E.g. C.P.L. vii, p. 143; x, p. 100; xii, p. 781.)

answer for non-residence, which were, of course, usually addressed to absentees who had no licence or dispensation;[1] fourthly, citations or summonses for unauthorised holding of benefices with cure in plurality.[2] It can usually be taken for granted that both warnings to reside and citations for plurality mean that non-residence had actually taken place, although technically to make this assumption is to prejudge the incumbents who were summoned to answer to a charge.[3] Licences to be absent were also usually acted upon, so far as can be ascertained; but dispensations for plurality - unless all the benefices concerned were in the diocese of Durham - can give no more than a possibility of non-residence since they did not normally specify the benefice in which the dispensed incumbent would reside. As will be seen, however, such dispensations were comparatively few, and any overestimation of absenteeism involved by taking them into account must be very slight.

From these licences, dispensations, monitions and citations, and from a few direct or incidental reports in the records of the prior and convent of Durham,[4] it is possible to ennumerate 172 cases of /

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1 E.g. R.L. f. 285v; S.S. cxlvii, pp. 104-5.

2 E.g. R.P.D. i, p. 66. It is interesting to note that, in spite of the fact that in 1492 he was granted a papal dispensation for plurality, John Hebborne, vicar of Tynemouth, was warned to reside in this benefice by Bishop Fox. (S.S. cxlvii, pp. 132; 102-4.)

3 R.P.D. i, p. 66.

4 In 1372, for example, Petrus Galen, dean of Lanchester, requested his two co-executors to carry out without him the commission with which they had been jointly charged by the bishop since he (Galen) was detained in Oxford. (M.C. 5490.)

of non-residence involving 160 clerks[1] among the 1,488 incumbents who are known to have had cure of souls.[2] Admittedly most of the statistics on non-residence come from entries in those episcopal registers which are still extant and which cover only about 100 years of the 230 encompassed within our period; but the recovery of the lost registers, while no doubt revealing many more non-resident clergy, would also lead to an increase - even if proportionally much smaller - in the total number of clerks known to have been beneficed in the diocese of Durham. Even if, in spite of this, we double the figure for non-resident clerks in order to make up for the records lost to us, we still find that no more than 21.5 per cent of the total of known incumbents of the parish churches were at any time absent from their benefices. Since many of these absences were for fairly short periods - e.g. for two years at a university[3] - it follows that the proportion of non-residence among the parish clergy of the diocese cannot have amounted to much more than 15 - 20 per cent, and may have been less.

Much of this absenteeism was also quite legitimate, licensed by bishop or pope, with strong injunctions in the licences to ensure the adequate serving of the cure of souls.[4] To fulfil this condition /

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[1] Some clerks received more than one licence covering different periods of non-residence.

[2] See above, p. 312.

[3] Of the 172 mentions of non-residence in the records, 108 were licences for absence, usually at a university, 38 were monitions to reside, 12 were dispensations for plurality and 14 were citations for plurality.

[4] E.g. S.S. cxix, pp. 23-24, 60.

condition the maintenance by the absent incumbent of a qualified curate in his parish was the principal necessity - a necessity which would usually be met more easily by an incumbent rector, who had the entire fruits of his benefice at his disposal, than by a perpetual vicar who was himself dependent upon a fixed stipend paid by the appropriator. The Durham records are not helpful in tracing the appointments of such curates; the bishops' registers do not note the fulfilment or non-fulfilment of the conditions attached to the licences of non-residence, and it is only when there are complaints directed against an incumbent on the grounds of neglect that we can deduce that a competent curate had not been provided. But although it is not possible to produce direct evidence about the extent to which such curates were maintained, there is some significance in the fact that of the 73 Durham benefices with cure of souls which were held by one or more non-resident incumbents 47 were rectories, the other 26 being perpetual vicarages or deaneries of collegiate churches. Thus a considerable majority of the absenteeism took place from the type of benefice to which a curate was most likely to be appointed, and whose incumbent could best afford to support him.

And this was not only because most absentee incumbents held rectories: it can also be shown that the benefices which they held included the richest and most attractive in the diocese. For example, 41 of these 73 benefices were situated in the archdeaconry of Durham, and 33 of them were in the gift of the bishop of Durham. Only /

Only in one parish in the bishop's gift has no non-residence been traced, and that was in the Northumberland vicarage of Stannington; while only 18 of the 59 parishes in county Durham seem to have had continuously resident incumbents. To both the patron and the section of the diocese with the wealthiest benefices the majority of the non-residents were inclined to gravitate.

Just as most of the non-residence occurred in the best benefices, so most of the absentees belonged to the upper classes of the clergy - clerks of the pope, the king, bishops and magnates, and university graduates; 108 of the 160 non-residents who have been traced were members of these groups. About a third of the absentee incumbents came from the south and midlands of England, which seems a fairly large proportion when it is remembered that only a fifth of the total number of inductions to benefices with cure of souls went to clerks who were not northerners.[1] Thus it appears that the greatest incidence of non-residence was to be found among those groups of incumbents which we have previously included under the heading of clergy who had a privileged position in the quest for benefices,[2] many of whom were not of local stock.

In this state of affairs there were both advantages and disadvantages. Some of the advantages have already been indicated: most of the absentees were rectors, moderately well-off, absent with /

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[1] See above, table 10a.

[2] See above, p. 363.

with official consent and under the conditions thereby imposed of providing a substitute; it was therefore likely that their benefices would be adequately looked after by curates living on stipends of a sort during their absence. Since many of their benefices were in the central and populous areas of the diocese which were most susceptible both to official supervision and to influence by what public opinion there was, such a likelihood would be increased. On the other hand, one of the principal justifications of the church's centralised and legally painstaking system of appointing to the benefices which were not in lay patronage - especially those filled by papal provision - was that it promoted the best qualified clerks to the best benefices,[1] and undoubtedly the majority of the benefices in which non-residence was most prevalent was filled by such high ecclesiastical patronage - usually that of the bishop, and sometimes on the basis of papal provision.[2] Thus if the very clerks said to be the most worthy of valuable preferment and best qualified to serve the cures spent much of their time away from their parishes, the bottom falls out of /

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[1] Barraclough, op.cit., p. 57.

[2] The case of Thomas Neville, rector of Brancepeth c. 1456-1498, is instructive: a king's clerk and a Bachelor of Decretals, he was a relative of the earl of Northumberland and on the petition of his father, Sir Thomas Neville, he received in 1453 a papal dispensation to hold two mutually incompatible benefices. (C.P.R. 1467-77, p. 304; S.S. cxlvii, p. 76; C.P.L. x, pp. 122-123.) He was thus undoubtedly well qualified and well connected; he was also of local, although aristocratic, family and he received preferment through papal interest; but at the same time the dispensation rendered him a potential pluralist and non-resident.

of this justification, at any rate insofar as it might be applied in the diocese of Durham. Although such clerks were the most persistent absentees, however, the probable total extent of absenteeism in the diocese[1] suggests that not even among them can it have been much more than 30 per cent, even if it reached that proportion. The great majority of the Durham beneficed clergy of all ranks, so far as the records show, resided in their parishes.

Non-residence in the Durham benefices appears to have been most prevalent in the mid-14th and late 15th centuries, although here again the incompleteness of the evidence makes it dangerous to dogmatize. In the period (1345-1380) covered by Bishop Hatfield's episcopate, however, 57 absentee incumbents have been traced; while between the years 1401 and 1436 only 17 have been discovered, most of them from entries in Bishop Langley's register. But sixty years later, during the short period of Fox's episcopate (1494-1501), 16 cases have come to light. The marked improvement in the situation in the early years of the 15th century is not perhaps surprising if we remember that at this time the established ecclesiastical institutions and habits of the middle ages were the objects of searching and often not very friendly scrutiny directed both from within the church and from outside. Half a century of strong and sustained assertion of royal and aristocratic rights in the church had combined with considerable popular anti-papalism fanned by Wycliffite doctrine, Lollard preaching, the unedifying spectacle /

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[1] See above, p. 415.

spectacle of the Schism and England's situation on the European political stage to produce - inter alia - the Statutes of Provisors and Praemunire. After much heart-searching and frustration the church herself had come to accept reform by Councils as the panacea for her ills, and the long-delayed decrees from Switzerland were adding their weight to the individual fulminations of local moralists such as Robert de Rypon and the public admonitions of provincial convocations. In fact the institutions of the church and the behaviour of the clergy were under a spotlight and the publicity was sufficiently intense to make good behaviour at the very least advisable. On the subject of non-residence alone, during the late 14th and early 15th centuries, there were edicts, mandates and solemn warnings from bishops, archbishops and in 1365 from Pope Urban V himself.[1]

Among other subjects which attracted the attention of the reformer and the disciplinarian were clerical stipends and the marriage of the clergy. In the middle of the 14th century Archbishop Islip of Canterbury was combining his efforts to see that stipendiary clerks with cure of souls resided and adequately performed their duties with mandates to ensure that they were properly paid.[2] In 1378 Archbishop Sudbury stipulated for the province of Canterbury a minimum stipend of 7 marks a year for incumbents with cure of souls, an increase of 1 mark over the figure aimed at by Islip.[3]

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[1] Wilkins, Concilia, iii, pp. 62-63, 120-1, 149-50, 267, 274.
[2] Ibid., pp. 1-2.
[3] Ibid., pp. 135-6.

On married clergy Archbishop Chichele was quite uncompromising: "Statuimus quod nullus laicus vel clericus conjugatis sive bigamus ... infra nostram Cantuar. provinciam de cætero jurisdictionem spiritualem exerceat qualemcunque ..."[1]

Amid the profusion of exhortations and reformatory decrees none is more intriguing, not to say mysterious, than Archbishop Courteney's "litera contra choppechurches" of 1392.[2] Professor Hamilton Thompson drew attention to this mandate and to the abuses of the system of exchanging benefices which called it forth in his Ford Lectures for 1933.[3] Since both exchanges and the abuses were not uncommon in the diocese of Durham and had an appreciable effect on the cure of souls they are worthy of some consideration.

The practice whereby two incumbents could exchange their benefices became prominent in England during the 14th century, and, since it was possible to exchange a benefice which involved cure of souls and therefore residence with one which did not, exchange enabled a pluralist to legalise his position without giving up unrecompensed his extra benefice or benefices. Such transactions were indeed encouraged by the pope's habit of providing clerks to benefices which involved them in plurality, the provision being accompanied by a temporary dispensation and an injunction to exchange as soon as possible for a compatible benefice - i.e. one without cure /

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1 Ibid., p. 370.
2 Ibid., pp. 215-7.
3 Hamilton Thompson, op.cit., pp. 107-9.

cure.[1] Agitation against pluralism and non-residence (which received expression not only in the measures which we have just examined but also, and extremely sharply, in Pope John XXII's Constitution, Exsecrabilis, of 1317[2]) very probably helped materially to create both a reason for exchange and an atmosphere which would encourage the church to condone it.

Condonation or even encouragement was far from being the historical attitude of the church towards exchange. At first it condemned outright the exchange of benefices as involving simony; but during the late 12th and 13th centuries canon law gradually developed to keep abreast of local practice.[3] By the 14th century a recognised system of exchange was in operation throughout western Europe /

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1 E.g. C.P.L. vii, pp. 80, 143.

2 C.J.C. Extravag.Joann. XXII, Tit.III, Cap.1. In his essay, Execrabilis (sic) in the common pleas (chapter 5 of Roman canon law in the Church of England) F. W. Maitland points out that not only did Pope John XXII enforce this constitution upon its issue, but later in England Edward III used it as a means of removing clerks from benefices to which he had the right of presentation, ignoring, of course, the papal reservation of benefices vacated on account of plurality.

3 Pope Urban III (1185-7), although prohibiting exchange in general, authorised bishops to transfer clerks from one benefice to another in cases of necessity (C.J.C. Decretal.Greg.IX, Lib. III, Tit.XVII, cap.5), while Innocent III stressed that clerks who exchanged their benefices "ea propria auctoritate" would forfeit them (ibid., cap.7), and Gregory IX (1227-41) forbade the exchange of spirituality for temporality (ibid.). At the end of the 13th century, Boniface VIII permitted the exchange of benefices to which the papal chancery had granted expectancies (C.J.C. Sexti Decretal., Lib.III, Tit.X), and in 1305 the Council of Vienne further defined the position by declaring invalid the collation to a benefice, which had been vacated for exchange, of anyone other than the appropriate party to the exchange (C.J.C. Clementinarum, Lib.III, Tit.V).

Europe, both for exchanges of benefices within one diocese, in which cases the bishop or his specially commissioned official received the resignations of both incumbents and reinstituted them to their new benefices, and for inter-diocesan exchanges, where the ordinary of one diocese, on the authority of his opposite number, usually received both resignations and carried out both institutions.[1] Mollat suggests that resignations either "simple" or for the purpose of effecting an exchange ("ad favorem tertii") were customarily made into the hands of the pope himself unless he had delegated the authority to accept them,[2] and the number of applications to the pope for confirmation of exchanges carried out by the diocesan ordinary implies a certain amount of respect for the custom.[3] But the number of curial authorisations of exchanges without further reference to Rome and without resignation to the pope in itself makes it probable that the bulk of local exchanges was effected without such resignation.[4] The complete absence of references to the papacy in the entries of exchanges in the Durham registers tends to confirm this view.

In the latter half of the 14th century the ecclesiastical authorities seem to have been more concerned with the abuses of the system /

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1 E.g. R.H. ff. 122v-123v; R.P.D. iii, pp. 451-5.

2 Mollat, La collation des bénéfices, p. 23.

3 For examples of such applications from Durham clergy, see C.P.L. iv, p. 85; C.P.P. pp. 343, 483.

4 E.g. C.P.L. iv, pp. 394-5, 377, 378, 450, 477, etc.

system than with the extent to which the practice of transferring benefices by means of exchange had grown, although this extent was impressive enough, as the following two tables will show. The first of these compares, over selected short periods, the number of presentations made upon exchange of benefices with the total number of presentations to livings in the royal gift (either permanently or temporarily because of vacancies or minorities) which are to be found in the Calendars of Patent Rolls and the Letters and Papers of Henry VIII; the second does the same for presentations to Durham benefices which are recorded in the registers of Bishops Bury (1338-1345), Hatfield (1345-1381) and Langley (1406-1437). No exchanges are recorded in the registers of Kellawe (1311-16) and Fox (1494-1501) and only two in Tunstall's between 1529 and 1540.

Table 17[1]

Presentations upon exchange to benefices in the royal gift.

Period	Number of Present-ations	Number upon exchange	Percentage upon exchange
July 1317-July 1321	361	2	1%
July 1324-Dec. 1327	228	37	16%
Sept. 1350-Sept. 1354	495	135	27%
June 1385-Jan. 1389	714	176	25%
Mar. 1413-Mar. 1416	184	55	30%
Mar. 1461-Feb. 1467	102	16	16%
Jan. 1529-Dec. 1530	42	1	2%
Sept. 1540-Dec. 1541	58	0	0%

[1] Tables 17 and 18 were originally prepared for a more general paper on the exchange of benefices; for this reason the periods selected are not the same for both tables.

clerks than by the large and growing number of exchanges. Fraudulent transactions, it complains, are ruining honest clerks; simony and plurality are becoming widespread; and the work of the church is neglected, to its grave disparagement.[1] The chopchurches, evidently the main object of the archbishop's attack, seem to have been groups of commercially minded clerks which formed in London and to which incumbents desiring to exchange could apply stating their requirements. Formalities, such as the production of letters of institution,[2] or accurate statements of the value of the benefices, were not considered necessary by these brokers, nor were the qualifications of the applicants an important consideration. It seems likely that an agent of the chopchurch, acting for the applicant, negotiated an exchange with a third party - or possibly he may have done so in his own name and then re-exchanged with his principal.[3] In either case the upshot would be that the applicant received a benefice to which he had no real right, the third party probably had one of much smaller value than he was entitled to - or /

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[1] Courteney's gravamina were very much to the point: false statements by clerks as to their titles to the benefices they proposed to exchange and as to their value were common (cf. Mollat, op.cit. p. 24; C.P.L. v, p. 472), as were inquests ordered by the pope upon reports or accusations of simony (ibid. vi, p. 155; vii, pp. 114-5, 151). In 1448 a clerk of St. Andrews diocese in Scotland paid another to exchange with him, and evidence is available of pensions being offered as bribes for exchange (ibid. x, pp. 406, 503).

[2] The Convocation of 1399 ruled that parties to exchanges must exhibit their letters of institution to prove their legal title to the benefices they wished to exchange. (Wilkins, Concilia, iii, p. 240; and see Hamilton Thompson, op.cit., p. 107, note 2.)

[3] Hamilton Thompson stresses the activities of the "middlemen" whether or /

or even none at all - and the chopchurch had a fat fee.

Direct evidence of the work of the chopchurches is admittedly scarce - although Hamilton Thompson has tracked down a 15th century circle of three Lincoln canons who specialised in the negotiation of exchanges[1] - for records of their transactions were hardly likely to have been kept. But that there was danger of fraud during exchanges is amply attested by the advantage which was taken of the opportunity available in canon law to resign a benefice conditionally, with a proviso that, if the exchange were not carried through to its proper conclusion, the benefice would revert to the original incumbent.[2]

Perhaps the most important check on the activities of the fraudulent /

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or not they belonged to chopchurches (ibid., p. 107), and he cites the rapid "turnover" of the deanery of Chester-le-Street in 1408 after the death of Thomas Hexham. "John Thoralby had collation on 6 Apr., but on 12 Apr. exchanged for the rectory of Lockington, Yorks E.R., with John Dalton, who was Bishop Langley's official. On 15 Apr. Dalton resigned, having accepted the vacant deanery of Lancaster, and was succeeded at Chester-le-Street next day by Walter Bosum. But a fortnight later, on 1 May, Bosum exchanged the deanery for the vicarage of St. Oswald's, Durham, with Robert Assheburn (R.L. ff. 14, 14v, 15), who held it till his death ... (ibid., f. 65v). A prebend in the same church was resigned by Thomas del Hay in 1411 and collated to Robert del Hay on 27 Dec. On 22 Jan. 1411/12 Robert exchanged this prebend with Thomas for a prebend in Howden, but Thomas again resigned it on 13 Mar., and next day Robert again had collation (ibid., ff. 51, 51v, 52v, 53v)." (Cf. below, vol. 2, under the benefices concerned.)

1 Hamilton Thompson, op.cit., p. 109.

2 Hinschius, Das Kirchenrecht der Katholiken und Protestanten, iii, Berlin, 1883, p. 283; cited by Mollat, loc.cit. An example from the diocese of Durham is recorded in R.P.D. iii, p. 317.

fraudulent exchangers was, however, the exercise of correct control by the ordinaries or other officials who supervised the exchanges. Courteney's chief practical appeal - as distinct from the ones addressed to the better nature of the miscreants and embellished by threats of hell-fire - was made to the official class among the clergy in their capacity as potential supervisors of exchange. The aim of the archbishop and of the convocation of 1399 was to eliminate simony and fraud by insisting upon the inspection of the titles and values of benefices to be exchanged.[1] It is to be presumed that the bishops, by going through the forms of institution in many illegal exchanges, must have connived at the proceedings;[2] and even if some of them remained personally ignorant, their clerks who prepared, filed and registered the relevant documents must have been well aware of what was going on. Indeed, such clergymen - lawyers, university men, episcopal officials - were themselves among the most persistent exchangers.[3] They were also most prominent among the clerks who so often acted as proctors for one or both parties to an exchange[4] and against whom so many charges of fraud, intimidation and other misdeeds were brought by indignant principals applying to the pope for restitution.[5] For the would-be incumbent /

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1 Wilkins, Concilia, iii, pp. 215-217, 240.

2 Hamilton Thompson, op.cit., p. 108. The connivance of the bishop of Chichester in an illegal exchange seems proved by the papal letter of 19 July, 1399. (C.P.L. V, p. 209.)

3 John Atte Lee, John de Batesford and John Henle, officials and household clerks at varying periods under Bishop Hatfield, were among the most noticeable exchangers during his episcopate. (E.g. R.H. ff. 79v, 85, 77v.)

4 E.g. R.P.D. iii, pp. 215, 411; R.L. f. 207; R.T. passim.

5 E.g. C.P.L. iv, pp. 477-8; vii, p. 87.

incumbent or exchanger who lacked either the proper qualifications or the proper titles, however, exchange by proxy made it possible for him to avoid the regulation procedure which might expose his inadequacies. By the 16th century the problem of the proctor had become so serious that a provincial council of 1529 prohibited the admission to benefices by proxy and without due examination, unless the applicant had at least a Master of Arts degree or the bishop could otherwise satisfy himself as to his qualifications.[1]

Although the university graduates and the episcopal and royal administrative clerks were the most guilty of making a trade of the exchange business, single exchanges were fairly evenly distributed throughout all ranks of the beneficed clergy. About 46 per cent of the total known institutions to benefices in the diocese of Durham was, as we have seen, in favour of what have been called "privileged" or specially qualified or well-connected clerks.[2] Out of a total of 259 known institutions which followed upon exchanges of benefices, 107 or approximately 41 per cent went to clergymen so privileged, 94 of them to graduates and officials of the episcopal and royal administration.[3] Exchanges also took place to and from benefices in the gift of nearly all the patrons of the Durham churches; as might be expected, the wealthier benefices of the bishop and priory of Durham were among those most affected. Benefices in lay patronage /

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[1] Wilkins, Concilia, iii, pp. 718-9.

[2] See above, p. 392.

[3] Calculated from data in vol. 2, below.

patronage seem to have been rarely exchanged, and since exchange inevitably implied a certain limitation upon the freedom of choice of the patron even if he approved of the project the fact is not altogether surprising, for the patronage rights of the laity were on the whole scrupulously observed by the church.[1] The general incidence of exchange in relation to patronage is perhaps best summarised in tabular form as follows:

Table 19

Exchanges and Patronage 1311-1540

Patron	Total known institutions	Number following upon exchange	Percentage following upon exchange
Bishop of Durham:			
benefices with cure,	721	86	11.9%
canonries and prebends	471	75	15.9%
Priory of Durham	371	45	12.2%
King	40	4	10.0%
Lay patrons	200	10	5.0%
Canons regular	130	7	5.4%
Bishop of Carlisle	59	8	13.6%
Other ecclesiastical patrons	412	24	5.8%
Totals	2,404	259	10.8%

Thus, even if the vast majority of the Durham clergy never took part in exchanges and even if most benefices were rarely transferred in /

[1] Cf. above, p. 303.

in this manner, as is evident from the fact that only 10.8 per cent of all the known institutions followed upon exchanges, most of the exchanges were concentrated in the 14th century and during Hatfield's episcopacy no less than 26.7 per cent of institutions were the result of exchange, so that in this period at any rate exchange played a major part in providing the incumbents of the diocesan churches. It is also more than probable that a number of exchanges, carried through without proper authorisation, never reached the bishops' registers; while papal letters granted - to curial clerks in particular - licences to exchange their benefices without reference to the ordinary or the pope.[1] We know, for example, that John of Barnard Castle exchanged his canonry and prebend at Auckland for the vicarage of Kirknewton only from the papal confirmation of the exchange in 1363;[2] the original transaction is not recorded in Hatfield's register, which does however note that he owed annates to the papal camera for the vicarage.[3]

At best the practice of exchange increased the already present tendency to regard the benefice as a piece of property - a fief - rather /

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1 E.g. C.P.L. ix, pp. 42-43, 485.
2 C.P.P. i, p. 414; C.P.L. iv, p. 33.
3 R.H., f. 44.

rather than a spiritual office;[1] in negotiating an exchange the point which the authorities insisted upon was not that the benefices should be of the same character[2] so that the incumbents might be suited to the jobs to which they were transferring; but that they should be of approximately the same value. At worst exchanges provided the occasions for many of the most fraudulent and simoniacal transactions of the mediaeval clergy. From the first simony was the principal contravention of the church's law to which exchangers were liable,[3] and for long enough any "pactum" or "transactio" in exchange was anathema.[4] Benefices exchanged had to be of approximately the same value, so that the one party would not have to compensate the other by a payment which might cover a simoniacal transaction, and it was the duty of the bishop or other official supervising the exchange to ensure that no simony was involved.[5] Inevitably, however, convenience dictated changes in practice, and one obvious way out was to exchange one fairly wealthy benefice /

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1 It is noticeable that the laws on exchange developed during the period (c.1150-c.1300) in which the system of papal provisions was evolving, and the operation of this system also tended to place emphasis upon the concept of the benefice as a piece of property. (Cf. Barraclough, Papal provisions, passim.)

2 As long as the question of compatibility did not arise.

3 C.J.C. Decretal.Greg.IX, Lib. III, Tit.XVIII, Cap. 5.

4 No benefice is to be vacated "sub pactis", declared the Council of Oxford in 1222 (Wilkins, Concilia, i, p. 587). Simony in exchange was condemned by the 1392 letter of Courteney (ibid., iii, pp. 215-7), as were "pacts" and "transactions" in Lyndwood's Provinciale, p. 74.

5 Ottenthal, Die päpstliche Kanzleiregeln, p. 4, note 15; cited by Mollat, loc.cit. In 1413 the papal nuncio in England received faculty to confirm any exchanges - even if they had been carried out /

benefice for two of smaller value.[1] But while such double-barrelled exchanges remained common, the payment of a pension to the party accepting the benefice of lower value became increasingly frequent as clerical squeamishness declined on the vexed question of simony. In 1448 the papal camera provided a handsome example by assigning a life pension of 150 gfl. of the camera upon the fruits of the archdeaconry of Tortosa to Vincent Clementis, S.T.M. - the papal ambassador to Henry VI of England - in consideration of his proposed exchange of the archdeaconry.[2] A papal licence of 1466 permitted a pension when two clerks of Tournai diocese exchanged benefices worth respectively 60 pounds and 10 pounds.[3] Nearer home, a similar settlement was reached in the diocese of Aberdeen in 1471,[4] and John Tunstall, rector of Haughton-le-Skerne, had to pay 8 marks a year to his predecessor after their exchange in 1534.[5] In effect, despite all qualms about simony, exchanges had come to involve frequent monetary transactions by the end of the 14th century and in all probability earlier.

Opportunities for unscrupulous clerks to abuse the system of exchange /

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out without the consent of the ordinary or others concerned - provided only that they were not simoniacal. (C.P.L. vi, p. 178; cf. p. 181.)

1 E.g. R.H. f. 68v; R.L. ff. 118, 118v.

2 C.P.L. x, p. 37.

3 Ibid. xii, p. 507.

4 Ibid., p. 744.

5 R.T. f. 19v.

exchange multiplied as the exchanges themselves increased during the 14th century, and in the diocese of Durham this increase seems to have been no less impressive than anywhere else in England. Tables 17 and 18 show, it is true, that the percentage of Durham benefices which was filled by means of exchange in the 14th and early 15th centuries was rather less than that of the benefices filled by royal presentation over the whole country. But it is likely that benefices in the royal gift, many of which were held by lawyers and administrative clergy who were notoriously frequent exchangers, were affected by exchanges to a more than average extent, so that in general the number of exchanges to Durham churches cannot have been much lower than the number to other English benefices.

Moreover, exchanges between benefices in the diocese of Durham and those in other dioceses seem to have at least equalled in proportion the interdiocesan exchanges in other parts of the country. Between the years 1414 and 1424, for example, 60 per cent of the benefices exchanged in the diocese of Canterbury were exchanged for churches in other dioceses, while of the exchanges in the diocese of Durham during Bishop Langley's episcopate (1406-37) 70 per cent were interdiocesan, and the figure for the period of Hatfield's episcopate (1345-81) was 53 per cent. Of course there were far fewer exchanges of Durham benefices than of Canterbury churches, just as there were far fewer Durham benefices, fewer institutions and, on the whole, longer tenures of benefices, so that the actual number of clerks who exchanged to Durham churches from other dioceses was /

was small compared with the number who exchanged to the benefices of the larger dioceses or those which had small and numerous parishes. Thus no less than 200 out of a total of 570 recorded institutions to benefices in the diocese of Canterbury between the years 1414 and 1424 were the result of exchanges; while in the diocese of Durham only 154 of the known institutions were made upon exchange during the whole of Hatfield's episcopate and only 57 during Langley's.[1] Nevertheless the fact that just as large a proportion of exchangers to Durham as to Canterbury benefices came from outside the diocese indicates that the "exchange value" and status of at least the better Durham benefices were in the 14th and early 15th centuries on a par with those of benefices in other parts of the country.

While exchanges introduced some new blood into the Durham church, it seems unlikely that they modified to any appreciable extent the social structure of the beneficed clergy. For one thing, there were not enough of them - over the whole of our period only 10.8 per cent of known institutions - for another, the exchangers were, as we have seen,[2] fairly evenly distributed throughout the various classes of the beneficed clergy. We may therefore take it that, if - very roughly speaking - about 60 per cent of all those /

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[1] In the paragraph above the figures for the diocese of Durham were obtained from data in volume 2, below; those for the diocese of Canterbury from the records of institutions in The Register of Henry Chichele, edited by E. F. Jacob, i, 1943, pp. 129-219.

[2] See above, p. 429.

those who obtained Durham benefices by exchange came from churches outside the diocese,[1] then about the same percentage of the clerical "upper classes" of graduates, officials and lawyers transferred from extra-diocesan churches. Since 94 of the known institutions upon exchange went to such clerks,[2] it follows that about 56 (60 per cent of 94) had exchanged from benefices outside the diocese. From data in volume 2 it has been calculated that 54 clerks of these "upper classes" exchanged from benefices in Durham dioceses to churches in other parts of England during our period, which means, in effect, that almost exactly the same number of privileged clerks exchanged out of Durham benefices as that which exchanged into them.

If the exchanges left the social structure of the Durham clergy more or less unaltered, their effect can be judged only by weighing their value in increasing the flexibility of the system of appointment to benefices and facilitating the interdiocesan movement of the clergy against their attendant dangers of simony, fraud, trafficking in benefices and absenteeism. It is fairly certain that many, if not most, of the clerks beneficed in Durham diocese who held important administrative posts and who were persistent exchangers were also frequently guilty of pluralism and non-residence. John Henle /

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[1] 60 per cent seems a reasonable figure, although detailed statistics have not been compiled upon this point; it will be remembered that 53 per cent of exchanges to Durham benefices during Hatfield's episcopate and 70 per cent during Langley's were interdiocesan, and these two episcopates cover the great majority of exchanges to Durham benefices which have been traced.

[2] See above, p. 429.

Henle, for example, treasurer of Bishop Hatfield and involved in at least two exchanges which affected Durham benefices, was in 1393 accused of plurality for holding the rectories of Sedgefield and Houghton-le-Spring at the same time.[1] The frequent and complicated exchanges of John Thoralby, dean of Chester-le-Street, have already been mentioned;[2] in 1420, when he held the rectory of Whitburn and prebends in both Lanchester and Chester-le-Street, he received a papal dispensation on account of his noble birth[3] to hold one other benefice otherwise incompatible provided he undertook to exchange the rectory of Whitburn for a compatible benefice within five years or, failing this, to resign it absolutely.[4] While Henle was only accused - although probably with justice - of pluralism, and Thoralby was even dispensed for it, Roger Holm, rector of Bishop Wearmouth, prebendary of Bishop Auckland and Chester-le-Street, and three times involved in exchanges of Durham benefices in the years 1372 and 1373, was evidently more blameworthy - or perhaps more unlucky; for twenty years later, in 1392, he was accused of holding the rectory of Bishop Wearmouth against the constitution /

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1 C.P.L. iv, p. 446; v, pp. 5, 78, 203, 337; cf. below, vol. 2, under Houghton-le-Spring.

2 See above, p. 426, n.3.

3 Presumably the church felt a responsibility to support him in the manner to which he was accustomed.

4 C.P.L. vii, p. 143.

constitution, Exsecrabilis and shortly afterwards excommunicated.[1]

Pluralism and non-residence, almost as much as simony, fraud and trafficking in benefices, were evils virtually inherent in the system of exchange as it was put into practice in the 14th and early 15th centuries. Although several of the most frequent exchangers of Durham benefices can be shown to have been guilty of other misdeeds, these are perhaps less easy to blame upon the exchanges themselves. Nevertheless a blush must have come to the cheeks of any serious canonist acquainted with the exchange of John de Appleby, D.C.L., dean of St. Paul's, London, and rector of Rothbury, with John de Appleby, B.C.L. rector of Caldebek in the diocese of Carlisle, who was very probably his son.[2] The worst crime of which any of the inveterate exchangers holding Durham benefices was charged was no less than that of murder, when William Beverley, a member of Bishop Hatfield's household and very briefly in 1369 and 1370 archdeacon of Northumberland, became involved in a brawl in Wolsingham rectory and - accidentally, as was established at the inquest - killed Hugh of the Buttery, one of the bishop's servants.[3] While it is not suggested that Hugh's death was the outcome of the archdeacon's lengthy career of benefice exchanging, it is a fact that, if the latter had been in residence in his archdeaconry /

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[1] R.H. ff. 77-77v; C.P.L. iv, pp. 460, 468; cf. below, vol. 2, under Bishop Wearmouth.

[2] See above, p. 410.

[3] This episode is related and Beverley's career traced in Professor Hamilton Thompson's paper, William Beverley, archdeacon of Northumberland (Medieval Studies presented to Rose Graham, pp. 216-232).

deaconry of Northumberland on the 17th of September, 1370, he would not have been in attendance in the bishop's suite at Wolsingham, which was in county Durham.

Given the fact that exchange did not, as we have seen, materially alter the social composition of the clergy in the diocese of Durham either for better or worse, it must appear that the system showed very few advantages to the church as a whole to compensate for the abuses which it encouraged when it was being most widely used as a method of acquiring and disposing of benefices. Admittedly, exchange was useful - perhaps, indeed, far too useful - to the individual clergyman who wished for some reason to transfer from one benefice to another; for example, in order to bring his benefices together in one diocese or in one district, or to consolidate two or more holdings into one of greater value,[1] or even to obtain ready cash by moving to a benefice of less value than the one he held in return for the payment of a lump sum or a pension from the other party to the transaction.[2] But while exchange was an amenity for the individual, it is very doubtful whether it was beneficial to the church as a whole and the cure of souls in the diocese of Durham.

Almost certainly, indeed, it was not, and from the beginning the /

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[1] In 1371, for example, Henry Grospois obtained the rectory of Boldon in the diocese of Durham in exchange for the church of St. Antoninus, London, and a prebend in Auckland. (R.H. ff. 68v, 76.)

[2] E.g. C.P.L. xii, pp. 547, 704.

the papal and metropolitan authorities, while usually prepared to take advantage of the convenience of exchange, nevertheless regarded it with extreme suspicion. The canon law hedged it with directions and prohibitions designed to prevent abuses, and Archbishop Courteney's letter of 1392 suggests that they were not altogether effective. But there seems to have been no foolproof method of ensuring that the apparatus of exchange was not put to improper use, at any rate while it was functioning at the high pressure imposed upon it in the late 14th century. It was only when exchanges were reduced to more manageable and fairly small proportions well on in the 15th century that the abuses to which they gave rise were brought under control.

Directly or indirectly the exchange of benefices was at the root of some clerical misdemeanour during our period and was responsible for some of the neglect of the cure of souls; but it cannot be regarded as the source of all clerical sin. An incentive to non-residence, it may sometimes have resulted in that neglect of the parish churches which is brought to light by inquiries into complaints usually preferred against their negligent predecessors by incumbents newly inducted into dilapidated churches.[1] But only

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[1] E.g. R.L. f. 14. Normally the incumbent was responsible for the upkeep of the chancel, while the parishioners were supposed to look after the nave. (Hartridge, op.cit., pp. 137-138; Hamilton Thompson, op.cit., p. 129; Myers, England in the late middle ages, p. 66.) Defective chancels form a fairly common subject of episcopal commissions of inquest in the Durham registers. (E.g. R.H. ff. 166v-167; S.S. cxlvii, pp. 28-29.)

19 such cases of neglecting the upkeep of churches have come to light in the Durham records of the later middle ages,[1] and none of these can be shown to have resulted from non-residence brought about by exchanges. While it is therefore probable that neglect of churches was a risk inherent in the widespread application of exchange, the evils which may be ascribed to the system with certainty in the diocese of Durham were plurality, non-residence and the fraud, bribery and simony which were indeed the outcome of its misapplication.

In addition, however, the exchange of benefices was from its very nature one of the strongest inducements to the clergy to regard their benefices less as positions of trust and spiritual cures than as items of property with possession based primarily upon legal titles.[2] To no small extent, therefore, the idea of exchange helped to form and maintain that concept of the ecclesiastical benefice which predominated until the Reformation and beyond. It is of course arguable that to regard the benefice as a piece of property was not in itself an evil in the mediaeval context. The spiritual duties of the parish priest were by no means obscured except in the eyes of such incumbents as deliberately ignored them, and /

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[1] Calculated from data in volume 1, below. 14 of the 19 accusations of allowing the dilapidation of churches were made against clerks of the academic and administrative classes; the other 5 accused clerks were "unprivileged" north of England men.

[2] See above, pp. 431-433.

and the detailed rules on the examination of candidates for orders and benefices together with the injunctions as to residence of the letters of institution[1] show that the cure of souls was clearly recognised by the church - at any rate in theory - as the prime concern of its priests. Reduced to simple terms, the matter depends upon the position to be assigned to the incumbent's reward for the performance of his duties, and, in a period when the job with a salary attached was very definitely the exception and rewards took the form of rights to property and revenues, it was inevitable that priests should appear to be seeking property rather than jobs as such; that their concern should be with "beneficium" rather than "officium."[2] While procedures such as exchange undoubtedly helped to foster such an outlook upon the ecclesiastical benefice, they did not create it, but were rather themselves created by it.

Other forms of neglect, inadequacy and even of crime on the part of clerks both in ecclesiastical and in secular affairs make isolated appearances in the Durham records, but so far as the surviving evidence shows, they remain isolated examples. The lurid case of William Burdon, vicar of Heighington, who in 1313 was proceeded against on account of the desecration of the churchyard,[3] can hardly /

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1 Cf. R.P.D. iii, preface, pp. lxxii-lxxiii; ibid., pp. 227-230.

2 Cf. Barraclough, op.cit., pp. 71-72; Pantin, op.cit., p. 35.

3 Bishop Kellawe authorised his official to proceed in the case against the vicar "super eo quod cœmeterium dictæ ecclesiæ effusione sanguinis dicitur polluisse, ac in eodem, sic polluto, mortuorum corpora tumulasse, moventur, seu movere sperantur, etc." (R.P.D. i, p. 486.)

hardly be accepted as typical. Robert Bamburgh, vicar of Eglingham was probably more representative of the north of England clerical miscreant. In the first place he was absent from his benefice and received a warning to reside in 1432.[1] This, of course, did nothing to set him aside from hundreds of his colleagues both in the north and in the remainder of the country; but his second omission could not have occurred in a benefice of a kind other than that of Eglingham, a large parish in the north of the diocese, which included semi-independent chapelries, the cure of souls in which was the responsibility of the vicar. Such parishes were typical of the sparsely populated areas in the north and it was the incumbent's job to provide and maintain chaplains who would directly serve the cures of the chapelries.[2] For this reason the value attached to the rectories or vicarages was high - Eglingham vicarage was valued at £26:13:4 in 1291 and £23:3:1½ in 1535[3] - but the somewhat unsatisfactory Robert Bamburgh seems to have been content to pocket his revenues and neglect his duties to the chapelries. He was unlucky, however, for the parishioners in the chapelries of Brandon and Brampton were made of sterner stuff than most and determined to ensure that their spiritual welfare was cared for. Some of the documents relating to this case which were filed among the Miscellaneous Charters are undated, so that the chronology of the affair is /

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1 R.L. f. 189.
2 See above, p. 205, n. 1; cf. Hamilton Thompson, op.cit., p. 125.
3 See below, vol. 2, under Eglingham.

is a little doubtful, but the account which follows is the most likely sequence of events during the years 1432 and 1433.

The parishioners seem in the first place to have complained to the bishop that the vicar had not appointed a suitable chaplain to administer the cure of souls in the chapel of Brandon and the bishop, after failing to bring the parties to an agreement, had ordered the sequestration of the fruits of the chapel. Bamburgh thereupon appealed to the pope, alleging an impediment. The pope seems to have disallowed this appeal but to have appointed the prior of Durham to be his judge-delegate and to investigate the affair. When the prior also found in favour of the parishioners Bamburgh denied the authority of his court and, summoned again to appear before the prior on 16 January 1432/3, he once more refused and was excommunicated by the prior; while a papal bull ordered him to provide a sufficient stipend for a chaplain. Against this sentence he appealed to Rome, but his appeal failed and a sentence of excommunication was declared by the papal chaplain who heard the case.[1] What the precise outcome was in the parish is not made clear; but it is likely that Bamburgh somehow made his peace, for three years later in 1436 he was still vicar and - evidently he was not a man to be discouraged by experience - was again about to suffer sequestration for non-payment of obventions and for non-residence.[2]

Possibly /

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[1] The relevant documents - as nearly as possible in chronological order - are M.C. 5630, 5163, 2613, 2609, 2587; Cart. iii, f. 195-195v; Loc. x, 16; M.C. 5642.

[2] R.L. f. 224.

Possibly Robert Bamburgh was more stubborn than most incumbents might have been in his defiance of the parishioners, the bishop, the prior and the pope, but such cases of neglect even if less flagrant are no more than might be expected given the conditions in the northern parishes. The incumbent's difficulties in a disturbed and undeveloped country - difficulties in finding suitable clerks prepared to officiate in the lonely chapelries, in obtaining his own dues and stipend and paying the stipends of his local subordinates, and in exercising supervision over distant sections of his parish - these must have presented a considerable temptation to the best of the rectors and vicars to turn a blind eye to the needs of the chapelries. How many of them succumbed to the temptation we shall never know, for it is unlikely that all parishioners were as persistent in pressing their claims as those of Brampton and Brandon, and, if any of them were, the evidence of their struggles has not survived. But while no hard and fast conclusions are possible, the possibility should be borne in mind that the case of Robert Bamburgh was probably less unique than that of William Burdon who had failed to prevent the disturbance of the graves in his churchyard.[1]

Breaches of the civil law by the clergy cannot be regarded as anything but isolated cases, bad in themselves and no doubt worse because committed by ordained priests. But it is not possible from the /

[1] Only a year before the proceedings against Bamburgh, Richard Drax, vicar of Gainford and later an advocate at the papal curia, was accused of neglecting the chapel of Whorlton. (Ibid., f. 185v.)

the summons of William Comyn, rector of Ovingham, to appear before the king's justices at Westminster on a charge of owing £29:6:8 to the executors of Robert de Herle,[1] or from Thomas Colton's purgation for a theft of wool from two Newcastle merchants,[2] or even from the absolution of William de Wolsyngham, priest, after his conviction for assault committed against two other priests, John Ukerby and Robert de Bredsall[3] - it is not possible from the misdemeanours of these three clerks to construct a general picture of the standard of behaviour of the Durham beneficed clergy. They tell us something of the kind of crimes which might be committed, and that the clergy no less than the laity might commit them; but the records do not reveal with certainty how many of the clergy committed them.

It is not the purpose of this section to claim that the Durham clergy were perfect, nor even that they did their jobs and administered the cure of souls as well as they might have done. Among them we have found men guilty of a variety of misdemeanours from non-residence to manslaughter - of incontinence, nepotism, pluralism, probable confidence trickery in the exchange of benefices, debt, theft, assault and battery, and every form of neglect of their benefices. Such men certainly should not have held the cure of souls, and, since they did, the case that all was not well with the state of the church in the diocese of Durham may be conceded /

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1 R.P.D. ii, p. 839.
2 R.H. f. 47.
3 Ibid. f. 146v.

ceded. But on such a standard of perfection all was not well with the mediaeval church in any place at any time. The crucial question is, what proportion of the clergy holding Durham benefices was composed of such miscreants? And it is not a question which can be answered with precision. Most of the crimes and misdeeds which have been named are known from only a few isolated examples, and while they probably occurred much more often than is shown in the surviving records, it is very unlikely that they happened on such a scale as to prove general depravity rather than individual guilt among the clergy. Non-residence, although the most common of the more definable factors likely to impede the cure of souls, and the extent of which can be estimated with some certainty, does not appear to have affected more than a fifth of the parish incumbents over the whole of our period.[1] On the basis of the surviving evidence, the critic of the parish clergy in the diocese of Durham during the later middle ages would therefore be entitled to charge that too many of them were not complying with the terms of their institutions let alone with those of their vows as clerks; but he could not with justification claim that active and conscious crime, misdemeanour or neglect on the part of the mass of the incumbents was drastically depressing the state of religion in the parishes.

It is, however, more difficult to assess the situation created by lack of ability on the part of many incumbents whose activities, blameless /

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[1] See above, p. 415.

blameless of any breaches of the civil or canon law, would never bring upon them a citation to appear before an episcopal court. Ignorant and incompetent priests were the target of many of the attacks of contemporary reformers and moralists, and widespread ignorance and incompetence on the part of the parish clergy might easily have a far more deleterious effect on local religious life than the more spectacular but less general misdeeds of the pluralists and exchange racketeers. Unfortunately, ignorance and incompetence - except on the few occasions when they led to glaring contraventions of law, etiquette or practice which were brought to the attention of the authorities - cannot be proved from the documents at our disposal.

Once again we are faced with a division of the beneficed clergy into two groups somewhat similar to the "privileged" and "unprivileged" clerks of the first part of the present chapter.[1] There is a minority of the clergy about the errors of whose ways we know a considerable amount: the absentees, pluralists, exchangers (if for the moment we may accept exchange as an "error" since it certainly did little good to the cure of souls); the remainder may not have been very good parish priests, but this generally cannot be proved. At least they were probably resident on their benefices and they did not come under open censure. Very roughly these two groups correspond to the privileged and unprivileged clergy. Most of the absentees were university men who obtained degrees, or officials /

[1] Cf. Pantin, op.cit., pp. 88-89.

officials who were away in the service of king, nobles or prelates; most of those who exchanged benefices often enough for it to be suspected that their aims were not entirely proper were likewise clerks of the upper class who had already worth-while benefices to put upon the market. It is fairly certain that few of them were either ignorant or incompetent - although some of them may have been out of practice in carrying out parochial duties. (On the whole, Durham benefices did not attract the royal and aristocratic morons who achieved episcopal rank at the age of ten and were just as competent to fulfil its appropriate functions at this age as at fifty.)

The majority of the incumbents, on the other hand, committed few offences recorded in extant documents, but they were equally colourless in other respects. While nobody can deny that many graduates appear to have been just as well-behaved as non-graduates, the latter decidedly predominate among the ranks of apparently resident clerks about whom little is known. That they were less well-educated than the graduates may be presumed; but a university degree was not, it may be suggested, a particularly relevant qualification for the incumbent of a hillside parish in the Pennines or Cheviots. If indeed we base our inferences strictly upon the documentary evidence, we are forced to conclude that the majority of the parishes in the diocese of Durham were served by clerks who were rarely absent, most of whom were of local stock, at any rate within the area of the province of York, and many of whom were in fact /

fact natives of the districts in which their parishes were situated; not very well educated, but perhaps for that very reason the more able to understand their parishioners.

In view of the strictures passed upon the ignorance and incompetence of such clergy by contemporaries such as Robert de Rypon in Durham and many other authorities throughout Western Europe, it would be unwise to accept without reservation a conclusion based upon a somewhat haphazard system of record, worse than haphazardly preserved. But at least it would be no more unwise than to accept firmly the opposite conclusion on the authority of the indirect evidence of the strictures themselves and of direct evidence which from the nature of the documentation can be based only upon isolated examples. It is rather late in the day to defend the mediaeval beneficed clergy against the sweeping charges of sin, corruption and neglect brought against them by contemporary reformers and by later and usually Protestant historians, and indeed it is hardly a part of the historian's task to do so. The purpose of the present study of the clergy in a single diocese will rather have served its purpose if it has succeeded in focussing attention on the fact that the parish incumbents did not form a group which it is possible to regard and discuss as an entity.

The late mediaeval church is likely to be misunderstood not so much because of sectarian attempts to portray it as altogether black or altogether white, but because of the implication, even on the part of many who colour to an indeterminate grey, that it was something /

something which was unified enough to have any single colour. It was not a unity, no matter how hard it tried to prove to itself that it was, and no matter how implicitly this unity has later been accepted. The church was composed of many groups, interests and individuals, some pulling together, some pulling apart, some pulling different ways at different times. And there were segments within the groups and sections within the interests. Even the compact College of Cardinals could split. The group with which we are presently concerned, the beneficed clergy in the parishes, was itself composed of many types of clergymen, divided by their local and social backgrounds, their education, their connections or lack of them, their previous experience as incumbents or in other ecclesiastical offices, their careers, if any, outside of their benefices, as administrators, lawyers, chaplains or scholars, and, not least important, by the nature and depth of their individual religious beliefs. Obvious as this point may be, it is one which must inevitably be obscured in the generalities inseparable from synthetic accounts of the pre-Reformation beneficed clergy.[1] By examining in detail a single diocese it is possible to offer some kind of a corrective.

What the Durham records seem to show is that the beneficed clergy may be divided into initial groups of local men and non-locals, graduates and non-graduates, rich men and poor, papal clerks, royal /

[1] Cf. Powicke, The thirteenth century (Oxford Hist. of Eng. iv) p. 448; Pantin, op.cit., pp. 27-28.

royal clerks, episcopal clerks, nobles' clerks, relatives of the high nobility, relatives of the local lesser nobility and gentry. Most of these groups had some individuality, although many of them merged with one another and many clerks belonged to two or more. Once beneficed in the diocese the nature of the benefices produced further groupings: rectors, vicars and canons, holders of large or small, wealthy or poor benefices in relatively wild or relatively quiet areas of the borders; pluralists and single benefice holders, residents and non-residents. It was possible, however, to make a very rough general division of the clergy into two main groups, which were termed "privileged" and "non-privileged", segregating those who had some special advantage of birth, education, connections or other qualification in the contest for benefices from those who had not. It was further evident that most of the misdemeanours of the clergy which were known from extant records were committed by members of the privileged group. Indeed the majority of these misdemeanours - non-residence, plurality, nepotism, simoniacal transactions over benefices and illegal exchanges - were simply not possible for poor clerks holding only one benefice which may not have been very valuable. And the crimes and misdeeds which could be committed by all - theft, assault, debt, neglect and incompetence, the last of which is perhaps a misfortune rather than a misdeed - do not occur in the records in sufficient numbers to enable us to ascertain with certainty which class was likeliest to commit them.

Most estimates of the quality of the late mediaeval clergy have /

have perforce had to rely on the only positive evidence available, which related to the higher classes of the clergy, together with the general accusations of preachers and reformers. It is important to realise that most of this evidence does not, and indeed - in the diocese of Durham at any rate - cannot, apply to the lower classes. While in the last analysis each incumbent must be considered and evaluated individually - and this has been attempted as far as was possible for the Durham clerks listed in volume 2 of this thesis - it is a virtue of the rough division of these incumbents into the two main categories mentioned above that it clearly indicates the group to which the majority of the direct evidence applies. The less privileged incumbents, about so many of whom we know little beyond the fact of their tenures of their churches, may or may not have been lazy and ignorant and inefficient; but, however this may be, it would be the height of unfairness to saddle them also with the peculiar misdemeanours of their social and professional "betters."

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION

This concluding section may well begin with the point which ended chapter 5. The beneficed clergy of the diocese of Durham during the later middle ages cannot be considered satisfactorily as an entity; it is necessary in attempting to reach valid conclusions about their genealogical, social, educational and professional background to distinguished between the various groups of which they were composed, and even on occasion to distinguish between one individual and another. In the same way, as was evident in chapter 4, the patrons may be divided closely into fairly homogeneous groups, although some stand apart as individuals or by virtue of their official position. There was, however, no uniform "genus patroni" any more than there was such a "genus clerici."

One generalisation may nevertheless be made at the outset, which is applicable both to the beneficed clerks and to their patrons: it is that the majority of them belonged to the north of England. While the statement is truer of the patrons than of the clergy; it is essentially true of both of them. Of the clergy it would seem, from such admittedly arbitrary tests as can be devised from the evidence and applied uniformly to some two thousand individuals, that 77.5 per cent of institutions to benefices with cure of souls in the diocese of Durham went to clergymen whose family connections were in the counties of England from Yorkshire northwards /

northwards.[1] Of the regular patrons of Durham churches in our period only four - the king, the abbey of St. Albans and the Oxford colleges of Merton and Balliol - were outside the province of York, and the majority of the churches were in the gift of patrons who belonged to diocese of Durham itself. Moreover between 82 per cent and 87 per cent of the benefices which we are considering were during our period in the gift of prelates or ecclesiastical corporations, only the remainder being in lay patronage.

Once it has been stated that the greater part of the incumbents were of local north of England stock and that most of the patrons were also local and in addition clerical, little further generalisation is possible. It begins, indeed, to break down over the very question of clerical provenance; for while 77.5 per cent of the clerks who held benefices with cure of souls were northern English, only 55.5 per cent of the canons of the collegiate churches came from north of the Trent.[2] Such canons, who did not have to serve a cure of souls, had no particular contribution to make to the religious life of the diocese which would be spoiled by a lack of /

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[1] See above, table 10a. As was explained in chapter 5, the provenance of about three quarters of the beneficed clergy was obtained either from direct record evidence or - much less reliably - from assigning surnames to localities. The other quarter had to be excluded from the calculations as their place of origin was unknown. Consequently no detailed accuracy is claimed for the figures on provenance given in the present or earlier chapters, which must be regarded as approximations.

[2] See above, table 10b.

of local knowledge and connections, so that it is still true to say that most of the parishioners of the diocese had priests whose local outlook was similar to their own and who spoke similar dialects. But division of the incumbents into "beneficiati curati" and "beneficiati non curati" reveals simply how untenable is the concept of a homogeneous secular clergy which can be approved or condemned as a unit. Within these two groups, moreover, much further subdivision is possible; for example, between rectors and vicars, archdeacons and rural deans, chaplains and curates, deans and canons. And this subdivision of the clergy according to the status of their benefices may be supplemented by subdivision according to their educational qualifications, to their professional experience both in pastoral work and in lay and ecclesiastical administration, to their patrons and to their genealogy. The tables in chapter 5, part 1, serve to illustrate in detail such analyses of the beneficed clergy: at this point it is sufficient to repeat the general conclusion that in mediaeval England there was no social unity among those in holy orders. Lawyers in the royal service, for example, who were absentee rectors or canons, beneficed in the diocese of Durham, had considerably more in common with their official colleagues, beneficed, say, in the diocese of Salisbury, than with Augustinian or Premonstratensian canons regular serving the cures of Northumberland churches appropriated to their convents.

If the church was much divided within itself by the varying classes /

classes, experience, social connections and educational qualifications of the clergy, the laity in the two counties of Durham and Northumberland were also divided. Merchants and craftsmen in the towns, farmers, shepherds, miners in the country; tenants of the bishop and of the priory, of the Northumberland nobility, or directly of the king as individuals or as members of urban communities - all such groups (and many belonged to more than one of them) had their own interests and their own demands to make upon the church.

While it appears, therefore, that the general population of the area was rising during the 15th and early 16th centuries much more rapidly than the number of ordained priests in a position to serve the cure of souls,[1] the effect of such a growing disproportion probably varied considerably from parish to parish. In the towns and in the very small south-eastern parishes, where distance was no problem and where friars and numbers of other clerks either unbeneficed or beneficed without cure of souls might help to ease the burden upon the parish incumbent, the increase in the population had very likely less serious effects upon the standard of pastoral work than it had in the larger parishes and among the scattered communities of the north and west. Pressure was no doubt also relieved in the localities of the castles of nobles and gentry, such as the lords of Hilton, where private and household chaplains were to /

[1] See above, chap. 1, pt. 2, particularly pp. 18-20, 39, and the table on p. 39.

to be found;[1] although infringements by any rivals upon those duties of the parochial priests which affected their income - such as burial - would not be tolerated.[2] The upper classes who could afford the services of private chaplains and the benefits of private altars (provided they could obtain the licences to maintain them) were less dependent upon the ministration of local incumbents than the poorer parishioners - a fact which may partly account for the scarcity of recorded complaints from the laity about absenteeism or neglect:[3] the natural leaders and spokesmen of the secular population did not always share the immediate interest of the majority in the maintenance of the parochial cure of souls. Thus two elementary factors, social class and geographical position, might create different interests and degrees of interest in the efficiency of the parochial incumbents.

From the early Norman period, such members of the upper classes as held the patronage of parish churches in the diocese of Durham were on the whole only too willing to surrender their rights of advowson into the hands of prelates or monastic communities. The initial impulse to such alienations seems to have stemmed from the great prestige of the Church of St. Cuthbert, and although several monastic communities - notably those of the Premonstratensian canons regular /

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[1] The chapel of St. Katherine, Hilton, in the parish of Monkwearmouth is particularly well documented from 1321 to 1531. (E.g. Cart. ii, f. 83-83v; iv, f. 69; R.H. f. 49v; R.P. i, ff. 20v-21; ii, f. 93v; P.C.R. v, ff. 75v, 97v, 241v, 242-242v.

[2] See above, p. 404.

[3] One of the few recorded complaints about non-residence was made in 1452 by a knight, Robert Ogle, on behalf of the parishioners of Norham. (R.P. ii, ff. 60v - 61.)

regular - profited from these gifts of patronage, over fifty per cent of the parish churches had by the beginning of our period fallen into the hands of the powerful palatine bishop and the prior and convent of Durham.[1] Although most of the transfer of patronage from lay to ecclesiastical control was completed by the end of the 13th century, the process continued during the 14th century, and there was even one isolated example of it in the 15th.[2] The general effect was a contraction of the group of patrons of Durham benefices, which was especially obvious among the lay members of it. While in 1311, 21 laymen - the king, magnates, lesser nobles and gentry - presented to 23 parish churches in the diocese, by 1535 this number had fallen to 12, and they held only 15 advowsons between them. Only four families - including the royal family and the house of Neville - held advowsons throughout our period; but although the composition of the group of lay patrons altered considerably, its social structure was not violently changed. Most important, perhaps, was the failure of the male line of the great Northumberland family of Umfraville in the first half of the 15th century, which resulted in the transfer of the gift of Elsdon rectory to the family of Tailboys; but even the Umfravilles had themselves alienated two of their churches - Kirkwhelpington and Ovingham - to monasteries in the 14th century.[3] There can be little doubt /

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[1] The alienations of parish churches between 1066 and 1540 are enumerated above, p. 183, note 1; cf. p. 173, table 2.

[2] See above, pp. 176-7.

[3] The disposal of benefices in the gift of the laity is detailed in table 6.

doubt that throughout our period the laity was gradually relinquishing many of its interests in local parochial patronage.

Presentation to benefices was not the only form of patronage which the laity was abandoning to the church. Between the episcopates of Hatfield and Langley, the fall in the numbers of titles to ordination provided by laymen was startlingly abrupt and complete, and from the early years of the 15th century the financing of newly ordained unbeneficed clerks was almost exclusively the concern of the church, mainly represented by the monasteries.[1] At the two most important points in his career, therefore, his ordination and his presentation to a benefice, it was becoming ever more necessary for the average clergyman in the diocese of Durham to turn for support and patronage not to the laity but to the church. No matter how much attention they paid to their own chaplains, and no matter how much they might contribute in finance, influence and power to the support of the monasteries who in their turn were sponsoring the ordinands and benefice-seekers, the nobility and the gentry must have exercised in the 15th and early 16th centuries comparatively little influence upon the careers of the parish clergy.

Throughout the period the two greatest of the local families, the Nevilles and the Percies, were becoming involved to an increasing extent in national politics, and the local administration of the north of England was passing into the hands of less powerful men /

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[1] See above, tables 16l and 16m.

men among the local nobility and gentry.[1] While it would be rash to attach too much weight to the scanty statistical evidence which is available, this distraction of the great magnates from local affairs is also implied by the apparently virtual cessation of the appointments of clerks in their service to either the parish or the collegiate churches in the diocese after the year 1400.[2] During the same period a more gradual falling off in the number of clerks in the service of the bishop of Durham is apparent from the lists of parish incumbents, and royal clerks also make progressively fewer appearances in the Durham benefices. It is not possible, however, to link these phenomena with a contemporary decline in royal or episcopal interest in the north of England. The Durham area was, indeed, a stronghold of the Lancastrian cause during the Wars of the Roses[3] and the Duke of Gloucester, later King Richard III, drew much of his support from Yorkshire;[4] while the early Tudors were sufficiently interested in the border areas to stabilise the northern administration in the Council of the North. It is true that the 15th and 16th century bishops of Durham were usually senior civil servants, royal ministers or diplomats liable to be absent /

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1 See above, chapter 2, pt. 2.

2 See above, table 15.

3 See above, p. 79.

4 See, for example, Stubbs, Constitutional History, iii, p. 230. The earl of Northumberland was one of Richard's chief advisers (ibid., p. 232), and his defection, together with that of the Stanleys, helped to decide the fate of the house of York at Bosworth (ibid., p. 239).

absent from their diocese for lengthy periods; and also that, partly as a result of the development during the 15th century of warring political factions more powerful and socially more comprehensive than any which had gone before, and partly for the very reason that royal interest in the north was increasing, the secular power of the palatine bishops was being both overshadowed by stronger political forces and, especially under the Tudors, depressed in order to clear the way for the establishment of effective royal government in the north. Yet the 14th century bishops were no less frequently royal servants absent on royal business, and the reduction of palatine secular power did not deprive the bishops of any of the ecclesiastical benefices at their disposal. If, therefore, the royal and episcopal patrons did not show a general disposition to abandon their interest in the Durham area, it is most likely that fewer of their clerks were appointed to local benefices simply because they did not want to be appointed, and it would seem that the Durham churches, many of which were falling in value on account of the disturbed border conditions, were becoming less able to attract the clerks who were sufficiently well connected and qualified to obtain benefices elsewhere. Analysis of the clergy beneficed in the diocese also shows that the types which to a growing extent filled the more attractive benefices during the 15th and early 16th centuries were those who had no qualifications save academic degrees or family connections with the local gentry.[1]

Without /

[1] See above, table 15.

Without detailed investigation of the beneficed clergy and patrons of other English dioceses it is impossible to say whether or not this rise of what might be called the "middle class" among the incumbents was unique to the diocese of Durham. Certainly it cannot have equally affected all parts of the country, for the clerical members of the high aristocracy and their staffs had to be beneficed somewhere; but it appears fairly certain that the growing influence of the gentry on ecclesiastical patronage was a national phenomenon in the later middle ages. When the monasteries were dissolved it was the country gentlemen who were able to turn their local knowledge to account in order to secure for themselves the best of the estates on the market,[1] and in the diocese of Durham it was they and not the magnates who acquired most of the advowsons which changed hands at this period.[2]

Those aspects of national politics which to some extent at any rate decided the fortunes of the northern magnates - including the palatine bishops - naturally had their most noticeable repercussions in the diocese of Durham upon the higher classes of clergy who held the more valuable benefices and who were dependent upon these magnates. These classes were also the most deeply affected by the international and ecclesiastical politics and movements which either produced or stemmed from the era of reform and the Councils. It /

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[1] H. Maynard Smith, Henry VIII and the Reformation, p. 118.

[2] Not all of them, however. The advowson of Chatton vicarage passed to the earl of Northumberland from the crown in 1560. (See above, p. 221, and, generally, chapter 4, pt. 1.)

It was they who benefited most often from the papal provisions which were reduced to a mere trickle in the 15th century - not that many provisions had ever been made to Durham benefices - and it was they who, if not parties to the majority of exchanges to and from the benefices in this diocese, at any rate provided most of the local examples of the multiple exchangers whose activities were partly responsible for the scandals of the late 14th century referred to by Archbishop Courteney in his missive of 1392. The less well-off incumbents, very few of whom ever received a benefice as a result of a papal provision or exchanged benefices more than once, if at all, were little affected by any political issues other than local ones. The dangers to life and property from the border wars and the dalesmen, and the changes in local patronage due to family inheritance or the alienation and appropriation of advowsons - these represented the most immediate impact of secular affairs upon the majority of the resident incumbents. And the reason given for such alienations was frequently the impoverishment of the monasteries which resulted from the northern wars.[1]

Ecclesiastical patronage in the diocese of Durham was usually, therefore, a matter of local concern. Papal provisions, royal presentations, and other extra-diocesan sources of patronage either occasional or indirect were available only to a minority of the incumbents, and interfered with the normal rights of only a few of the regular patrons - primarily with those of the bishop of Durham, who /

[1] See above, p. 178.

who had the gift of most of the wealthier benefices. It is noticeable that the only known local protests against papal provisions came from a bishop, Richard de Bury, who wrote to the pope pleading that disturbed conditions in the diocese made it difficult to provide for scholars in the local benefices; he asked leave to find appointments for some of his own clerical protégés and begged the pope to cancel some of the papal provisions.[1] Also, in his book, Philobiblon, Bury complained of the misuse of papal provisions - and also, be it noted, of the patronage of prelates and lay magnates - in order to promote unworthy clerks to high ecclesiastical office.[2] He seems, indeed, to have been trying to kill two birds with one stone: both to effect some reform in the application of non-local patronage and to safeguard his own interests as patron and those of his clerical dependants.

But the bishop and the priory of Durham were the only two of the diocesan patrons who possessed benefices in sufficient numbers and of sufficient wealth to attract much attention from papacy, the king, or other "occasional" or "indirect" patrons,[3] and even they made the majority of the appointments to the benefices in their gift without significant interference.

The patronage of the Durham benefices was not only for the most part /

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1 Letters from Northern Registers (Rolls Ser. lxi), p. 380.

2 Richard de Bury, Philobiblon, chapter ix (King's Classics edition, pp. 69-70), cited above, p. 169.

3 See above, chapter 4, pt. 3.

part in local hands; most of it was also in clerical hands.[1] Thus to a marked degree both patrons and incumbents formed a close local unity into which it was hard for outsiders to break, as was discovered by the 15th century would-be sponsors of clerks who found it very difficult to pin down the priors of Durham to make definite presentations and not merely promises.[2] The patrons - most of them belonging to the diocese of Durham - presented to the diocesan parish churches incumbents well over three quarters of whom were of northern English extraction. This local unity of priests and patrons finds a parallel, interestingly enough, in the secular administration and politics of the north of England, which, whether organised on the spot by the greater families, as at the beginning of our period, or controlled immediately by the less powerful men of the district under royal councils - ultimately supervised by the Tudor government, as at the end, - formed always a special problem for the monarchy which - like that of the Welsh Marches - had to be dealt with apart from the governance of the rest of the kingdom.[3]

Those topographical and political features which tended to mark off the north of England as a separate area naturally contributed to the individuality of the church in the diocese of Durham. In the parishes the resident clergy shared the life of the lay population /

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[1] See above, p. 170.
[2] See above, pp. 274-277.
[3] See above, chapter 2.

population, farming the glebe as the peasants farmed their lands, sharing with their parishioners the perils and losses of plagues, wars and the reivers. On a larger scale, the monastery of Durham had its sheep runs, the bishop his lead and iron mines; and both depended, as did the laity, upon the local functioning of transport and trade which enabled them to partake in a small way of the advantages of the outside market in the south and in Flanders for coal, metal products, wool and skins. The creation of a wool staple at Newcastle to serve the trade of the northern counties in 1464[1] implied the existence of an economic area which tended to function as a unit, and of this unit the church in all its sections formed a part.

Not only in the social and economic spheres of local life, however, but also in those of custom, law, and constitution, the church had an integral place. The sanctuaries, which gave much of its character - and sometimes a not very desirable character - to the north until their suppression in the reign of Henry VIII, were originally founded upon an ecclesiastical concept of refuge; and while the cathedral of Durham was itself the greatest of the ecclesiastical sanctuaries, the county palatine of Durham, of which it formed the hub, was the largest of those which served the secular purpose of excluding royal justice in the form both of writs and of the law officers of the crown.[2] The palatinate jurisdiction over county /

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[1] See above, pp. 8, 66.

[2] See above, pp. 63-65.

county Durham, stemming from an early religious veneration for the shrine of a saint and from later military necessities and feudal concepts, placed the bishop of Durham at the highest point of local feudal society and government; while the endowments of Cuthbert's Church established him as the greatest of all the ecclesiastical patrons. In the secular and clerical aspects of his office, indeed, the palatine bishop symbolised the integration of the Durham church with the social structure and development of the north.

Local ties varied in strength, however, throughout the various ranks of the clergy. Those incumbents who belonged to the legal and administrative staffs of kings and bishops, and the few provided by the pope, showed a relatively high proportion of clerks from outside of the diocese of Durham among their numbers. A large number of them came from Yorkshire and may be counted as "local" in the sense that they came from the north of England; but a considerable proportion came from south of the Trent, sometimes in the entourage of newly-appointed bishops whom they had previously known or served in other capacities.[1] The proportion of incumbents who were natives of the south and midlands of England was particularly high /

[1] A notable example is the celebrated doctor of laws, Richard Nykke, who was Bishop Fox's vicar-general in the diocese of Bath and Wells before the latter was translated to Durham. Pope Alexander VI's bull of translation was dated 30 July 1494; on 23 December Nykke was collated rector of Bishop Wearmouth, and on 15 February 1495 he received his commission as official and vicar-general in the diocese of Durham. These documents form the first three items in Fox's Durham register. (S.S. cxlvii, pp. 1-6.) See also above, p. 360.

high in the canonries and prebends of the collegiate churches,[1] to which many of the bishop's officials and royal clerks were appointed and which - since continual residence was not obligatory - were particularly attractive to clergymen who had benefices or official positions in other parts of the country.

Nearly all of the clerks with whom we have been concerned have been included in the tables and the discussion by virtue of their position either as incumbents of the parish churches in the diocese of Durham or as prebendaries of the collegiate churches. Attention has been focussed upon these two classes, parish incumbents and secular canons, first because they are the best documented of the groups within the mass of the diocesan clergy, and secondly because the cure of souls - the spiritual welfare of the people - was primarily the responsibility of the former of them; while the latter, who did not bear this responsibility, form, it is hoped, an interesting and instructive contrast. Archdeacons and the heads of the collegiate churches have been treated along with rectors and vicars since they too had parishes within their care; while the masters of hospitals have been excluded from consideration because they had not,[2] and also because the evidence available concerning the masters or wardens of all except the half-dozen larger hospitals /

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[1] See above, table 10b.

[2] When in 1408 the church of Staindrop was converted into a college which served some of the purposes of a hospital, the master did not serve the parochial cure of souls in person; instead a perpetual vicar was appointed. (See below, vol. 2, under Staindrop.)

hospitals is very limited.

The title of this thesis itself implies the exclusion from consideration of the regular clergy as such, although many of the Premonstratensian and Augustinian canons have been dealt with in their capacity as vicars of parish churches appropriated to their monasteries. A more complete picture of the structure of the church in the diocese of Durham would undoubtedly have been obtained had the regular clergy been included; and indeed the original intention was to include them. But the material on the monks is so different from that upon which our consideration of the secular clergy has been based as to have necessitated a separate treatment. It seemed therefore advisable to exclude them and to concentrate upon the more homogeneous subject of the beneficed secular clergy. Moreover, while it would be wrong to regard the monks as cut off from the life of the lay population, especially in the north of England where monastic hospitality was such an important feature of social life, they were not in the same close relation with the laity as the resident incumbents who held the parochial cures of souls, and were therefore less immediately responsible for the spiritual state of the diocese. Some of the monastic churches, however, such as those attached to the Benedictine houses of Holy Island and Monkwearmouth, functioned also as parish churches and in such parishes the monks themselves served the cure of souls. But since no incumbent was appointed by the regular process of presentation, institution and induction with the pertinent documentation, these /

these monastic churches have been excluded from consideration.[1] The friars have also been omitted from the discussion in spite of their considerable pastoral activities of, for example, preaching, hearing confessions and undertaking burials, again for the reasons that the records fail to provide the details upon them which we have for the beneficed secular clergy, and that - like that of the monks - their position within the Durham clergy really forms a separate subject.[2]

A more serious defect than the neglect of the regular clergy, however, is our inability to bring to bear upon the mass of unbeneficed clerks, chantry priests, chaplains, curates and parish clerks even the crude statistical evidence which could be assembled upon the rectors, vicars, deans and secular canons. The structure of the regular clergy might be regarded as entirely different from that of the seculars; their organisation was different and in the early centuries of monasticism it was not even usual for them to be ordained.[3] But the career of the secular clerk might well lead him to chaplaincies, either with large households or in chapelries constituting subordinate units of parishes, to chantry chaplaincies and to the assistant positions in parish churches which did not require the higher orders, as well as to rectories, vicarages or prebends /

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1 A complete list of parishes omitted from the statistics on which much of the present thesis is based will be found on p.xiii.

2 See above, pp. 117-118,

3 Knowles, Monastic order in England, p. 19.

prebends, and the holders of such lesser positions in the church formed an important part of the secular clergy. It is impossible to make with certainty generalisations about the social background of these clerks, of whom, towards the end of our period, there may well have been over two hundred in the diocese of Durham.[1] We may, however, hazard a few suggestions. Although no systematic search of the records was made for mentions of such clerks, 386 of them were discovered in the course of the quest for material on the parish incumbents.[2] So far as can be ascertained, seven of them had university degrees, probably about forty could claim relationship with local families of importance, and few were not natives of the north of England. It would be rash to claim that these clerks were necessarily representative of the many hundreds of clergymen who filled the church's humbler posts in the diocese of Durham during the whole of our period. Yet they were stationed as chaplains, chantry priests, curates, parish chaplains, and holy water clerks in a fair cross-section of parishes, from Branxton in the far north to Darlington /

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[1] See above, p. 39, table; cf. Dr. Hartridge's section on the assistants of the parish incumbents in A history of vicarages in the middle ages, pp. 128-137. Pantin suggests (The English Church, p. 28) that "in some districts they (the unbeneficed clergy) outnumbered the beneficed clergy by nearly two to one." In the diocese of Durham, where the size of many parishes led to the establishment of local chapelries, the proportion of clerks holding minor positions was very likely even higher.

[2] 53, who were assistants to parochial incumbents, have been listed in volume 2 under the parishes in which they served. Many of of the others served chapels and chantries in Newcastle, Gateshead, Durham City, and the other towns.

Darlington in the south and from the large parishes of Alston and Simonburn in the western hills to the urban church of St. Nicholas in the city of Durham. There is at any rate a case, therefore, for suggesting that the background of most of these clergymen was not unlike that of the majority of the incumbents with whom this thesis has principally been concerned, who had no special academic or professional qualifications, patronage, or family connections to assist them in their search for preferment. If this suggestion is correct, then the proportion of the total secular clergy of the diocese who were "privileged" or who did not come from the north of England must have been small indeed, and the argument that the Durham church constituted to a very large extent a local entity is considerably strengthened.

Having examined in some detail the church in the diocese of Durham during the later middle ages, and having described the patrons, the operation of patronage and the social structure of the secular clergy, it remains to ask what were the principal factors which determined the nature of the patrons, patronage and the clergy as they have been described? Why were the majority of the benefices in the gift of local and ecclesiastical patrons; why were the majority of the incumbents natives of the north of England, most of them non-academics, not high administrative clerks, not pluralists or absentees, not protégés of the pope, the king or the magnates? It is worth while attempting to explain the particular position in the diocese of Durham, because the general picture of the late mediaeval church in England and Western Europe which is painted by contemporary reformers and /

and moralists and by many later historians is one of corrupt patrons and corrupt practices in patronage, leading to the appointment of clerks who were either grossly incompetent or grossly uninterested in their benefices except as sources of income on which they could live while they pursued careers in London, in Rome, at universities, or in the staffs of cardinals, bishops or nobles; while some of them were enabled merely to maintain their state as members of aristocratic families.

Such corruption has tended to be assumed, whether it was regarded chiefly as the result of papal reservations and provisions or of local aristocratic interference in the appointment of the clergy. Papal provision was held to be an unwarranted intrusion upon the rights of local patrons, while influence exerted by magnates upon presentations to churches not in their own gift was looked upon as impeding the proper functioning of the ecclesiastical machinery of appointment to benefices, whether this involved papal provision or simply local episcopal examination of candidates and institution.[1] In legal terms, a contest was postulated between the layman's rights in providing clerks for the churches founded by his ancestors - a Germanic concept which was reinforced by the feudal /

[1] Cf. Barraclough, Papal provisions, pp. 21-22; Richard de Bury, Philobiblon, p. 70, which condemns certain results of both papal provision and lay sponsorship; and, for the case against the papal provisions, the preamble to the Statute of Provisors (25 Ed. III, 4; Statutes of the Realm, i, p. 316.)

feudal view of the parish church as an adjunct of the manor - and, on the other hand, the church's duty of maintaining the cure of souls and the interests of the clergy - a duty which achieved expression in canon law, and for the performance of which there was evolved a responsible hierarchy of priests, bishops, cardinals and pope.[1] So far as the parish churches and prebends of the diocese of Durham are concerned, the contest was decisively won by the claims of the ecclesiastical administration. The veneration of St. Cuthbert and the ensuing dominance of the bishop and cathedral priory of Durham made this victory certain by the simple means of bringing most of the diocesan churches into the gift of the bishop and the monks, while the palatinate power placed the bishop in a strong temporal position vis-à-vis the local aristocracy.[2] The isolation of many parishes, disturbed local conditions, and the poverty of monasteries and churches, which induced the greater magnates to alienate many of their churches to the monks, still further excluded the laity from direct participation in local patronage. Nor is there evidence that they unduly interfered indirectly by trying to persuade ecclesiastical patrons to appoint their relatives /

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[1] Cf. Barraclough, op.cit., pp. 48-49.

[2] It is paradoxical that the strength of the Durham clerical patrons rested so largely upon the essentially lay concept of the palatinate on the one hand and, on the other, upon the monastic system of appropriating churches which, in Ulrich Stutz's words was the "zweite Tochter des Eigenkirchenrechtes und ... jüngere Schwester des Patronates." (Stutz, Gratian und die Eigenkirchen, p. 12, quoted by Barraclough, op.cit., p. 52, note 1.)

relatives or protégés, except perhaps to priory benefices in Yorkshire and Lincolnshire. A large number of relatives of the local gentry, however, seems to have obtained Durham benefices,[1] which suggests the possibility that they received some sort of preferential treatment; but far from enough to alter radically the social structure of the beneficed clergy.

While the church was dominant among the Durham patrons, and while appointments to benefices were usually carried out in such a manner as to give prime consideration to the interests of the clergy and - if compatible therewith - to the parochial cure of souls; this "victory" over the relics of the proprietary church concept was not won by the pope over magnates in order to ensure the appointment of applicants for papal provisions and the exclusion of the "younger sons" of the nobility. In Durham the victory was on a lower plane and was essentially won by the bishop and convent of Durham. Indeed it is hardly accurate to call it a victory at all, since the magnates at an early period alienated their churches voluntarily and later on were rarely interested in Durham benefices for their sons and clerks.

The most important answers to the questions asked above about the reasons for the development of Durham patronage and the composition of the beneficed clergy along the lines indicated must therefore be sought not in Rome nor Avignon, not in the political and legal treatises of the papalists and anti-papalists, not even in the /

[1] See above, pp. 357, 359, table 14.

the royal court at Westminster and the political policies of Plantagenet or Tudor monarchs; but rather in the political and religious development of the diocese of Durham itself, in its context within the border areas of northern England. The great Saxon and early Norman donations to the church of St. Cuthbert, the palatinate jurisdiction of the bishop which made him a lay lord and patron as well as diocesan ordinary, and the several local reasons[1] which resulted in the continuance of the process of alienation into the later middle ages - these were the factors which determined the patronage of the Durham churches and the overwhelming predominance of the bishop and the monasteries as patrons. During our period the border wars and banditry together with the resulting impoverishment of many of the benefices and their isolated positions greatly reduced the attractiveness of all but the more valuable and those in the more populous areas to highly qualified and well connected clerks. It is most probable that it was for these reasons rather than for any of higher political or religious moment that so few papal provisions to Durham benefices took place and that royal and aristocratic clerks formed a small minority among the incumbents of the diocesan churches.

There is no intention to suggest that the patronage and clergy of the diocese of Durham were typical of those of all dioceses in western Europe or even England. How typical they were cannot be known /

[1] For example, the poverty of monasteries and churches and the developing interests of the magnates in the south of England.

known until detailed studies of other dioceses have been made;[1] but it is at any rate certain that in no other English diocese did the bishop enjoy such extensive lands, temporal power and advowsons as the lord palatine of Durham. If, however, the results of the present investigation can be applied only to the diocese of Durham, which must stand in isolation until equivalent studies have been undertaken for many other dioceses, it is still hoped that the results will have added weight to the contention that only by means of such local studies can a reliable picture be obtained of the condition and composition of the late mediaeval clergy.[2] Valuable as are analyses of the evidence in the papal records or even in the royal letters patent, they tend to focus attention too exclusively upon the wealthier benefices which did not attract only local clerks. In the diocese of Durham such benefices were in a minority, and nowhere does it seem likely that they formed a large majority. During the later middle ages the spiritual welfare of the bulk of the laity was in humbler hands than those of their incumbents, and to find out whose those hands were we must apply in the first place to the local diocesan records. We must search not only in the Vatican Archives, and in the national libraries and record offices, but also in the registries of the cathedral cities and even, it may be, in the parishes themselves. For it is in the local records that the characteristics of the local clergy are most truly revealed.

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[1] Cf. Pantin, op.cit., pp. 26-27.

[2] See above, introduction, pp. xix-xx.

B I B L I O G R A P H Y

MANUSCRIPTS

Durham. Muniments in the Archives of the Dean and Chapter.[1]

Documents listed in Repertorium magnum ecclesie cathedralis Dunelm. papalium, regalium, archiepiscopalium, pontificalium, archidiaconalium et specialium, factum circa annum MCCCCLVI, Ro. Nevile episcopo, Johanne Burnby, priore. The most useful groups for our purposes are 'Pontificalia' (charters by the bishop of Durham; followed by various documents concerning the relations of the bishop and the convent), 'Archidiaconalia Dunelmensia' and 'Archidiaconalia Northumbriensia' (documents concerning the relations of the archdeacons and the convent, etc.), and 'Specialia' (title deeds to properties arranged under places).

Locelli. "The collection known as the Locelli was apparently begun to be formed about 1500; it is supplementary to the Repertorium magnum; it contains, not title deeds to property, but documents of legal and administrative business, both ecclesiastical and secular."[2] Items as cited in footnotes in vols. 1 and 2.

Miscellaneous charters. A nineteenth century collection, including legal and administrative material, both ecclesiastical and secular, of over seven thousand documents not included in, or extracted from, the Locelli and Repertorium magnum. Items as cited in footnotes in vols. 1 and 2.

'Registra' (5 vols.) and 'Registra parva' (3 vols.) of the prior and convent of Durham. Vol. 1 of the 'Registra' contains leases to c. 1400, the rest are letter-books of the priory, c. 1312-1538.

Cartularies (4 vols.) of the priory and convent of Durham.

Cartulary of the almoner of Durham priory, 13th-14th centuries.

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[1] For a description of the Dean and Chapter muniments see The muniments of the Dean and Chapter of Durham; a report to the Pilgrim Trustees, 1939. By Sir F. M. Powicke and W. A. Pantin.

[2] Ibid.

Register N. Registrum papireum diversarum literarum cancellarie Dunelm. (See Pantin, Letters from Durham registers. (Oxford Hist. Soc. N.S. iv, pp. 219-220.))

--- Dean and Chapter Library.

MS.C.IV, 25. Register L. Registrum papireum diversarum literarum de officio cancellarie monachorum Dunelmie quondam Roberti de Langchestre cancellarii et postea feretrarii Dunelmie. (See Pantin, op.cit., p. 219.)

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Randall MSS. Manuscripts from the collection of Thomas Randall, vicar of Ellingham, 1768-1775.

Sharp MSS. Manuscripts from the collection of Sir Cuthbert Sharp (1781-1849).

British Museum. Cotton MSS. Faustina A 6. Liber prāesentationum et literarum prioris et conventus ecclesiāe Dunelmensis; et aliorum ad ipsos.

--- Harleian MSS. 4894. Roberti de Rypon sermonum liber.

--- Lansdowne MSS. 397. Codex membranaceus, sāec. XIV. exaratus, et olim Johanni Wessyngton, priori ecclesiāe Dunelmensis pertinens, ut ipse propriāe manus inscriptione testatur; qui quidem Johannes plura de eadem ecclesia compilavit.

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Vols. 1-2 contain Kellawe's register, 1311-16; vol. 3 contains (i) A collection of documents relative to the palatinate before and during Kellawe's episcopate, (ii) Taxation of benefices within the diocese of Durham, (iii) Ordinations, 1334-45, (iv) A portion of Richard de Bury's register, 1338-43, (v) An appendix; vol. 4 contains (i) Additamenta, ex archivis publicis assumpta (some being stray leaves of Kellawe's and Bury's registers), (ii) Excerpta quaedam, ad palatinatum Dunelmensem spectantia; assumpta e libro quondam in usum Ricardi de Bury (Bury's Letter-book).

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4. Testamenta Eboracensia; or, wills registered at York. Pt. 1. (1316-1430.) 1836.

5. Sanctuarium Dunelmense et sanctuarium Beverlacense. 1837.

6. The priory of Finchale ... charters ... inventories and account rolls. 1837.

7. Catalogi veteres librorum ecclesiae cathedralis Dunelm. 1838.

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66. Chartularium abbathiae de Novo Monasterio. 1876.

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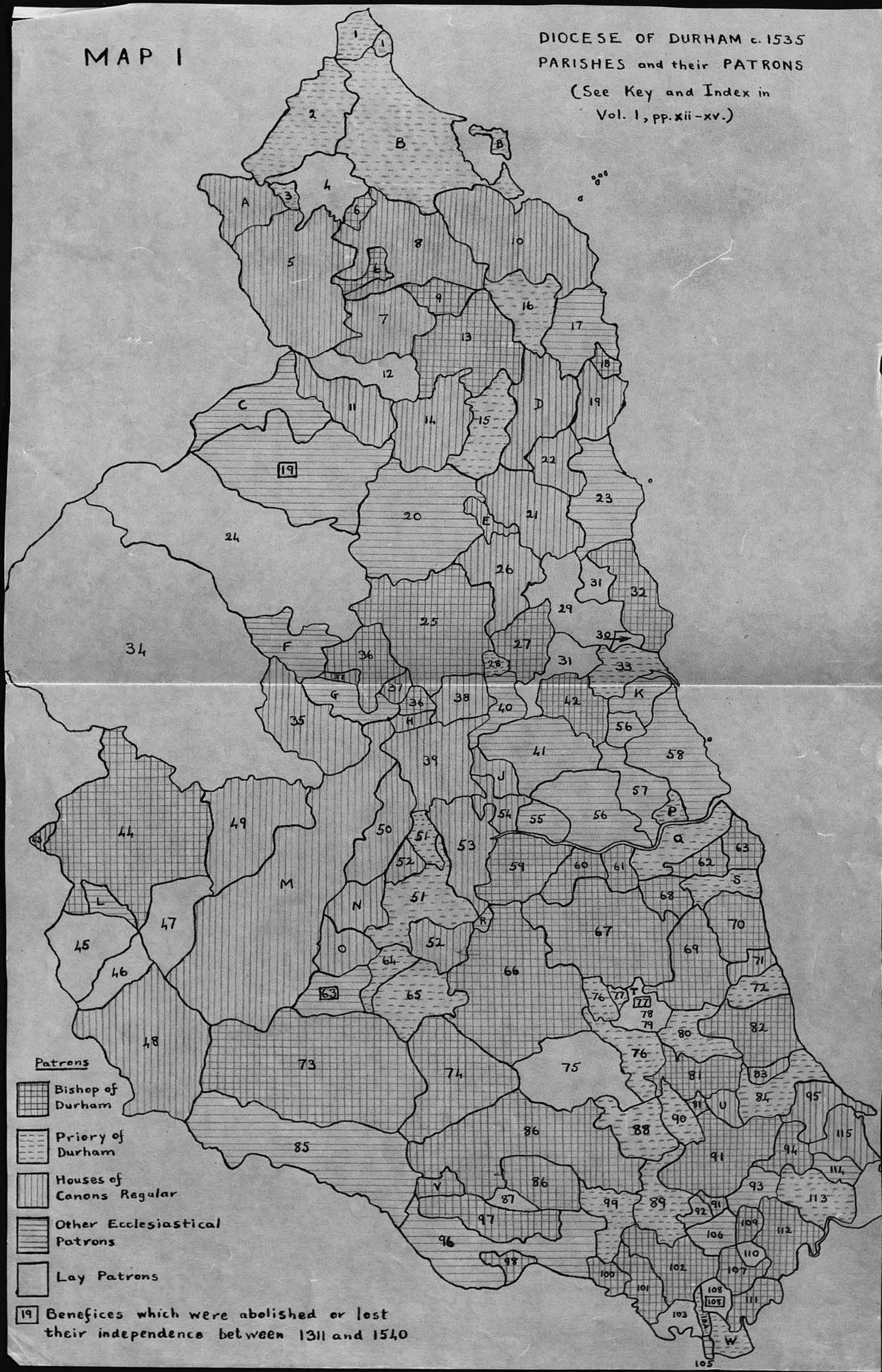
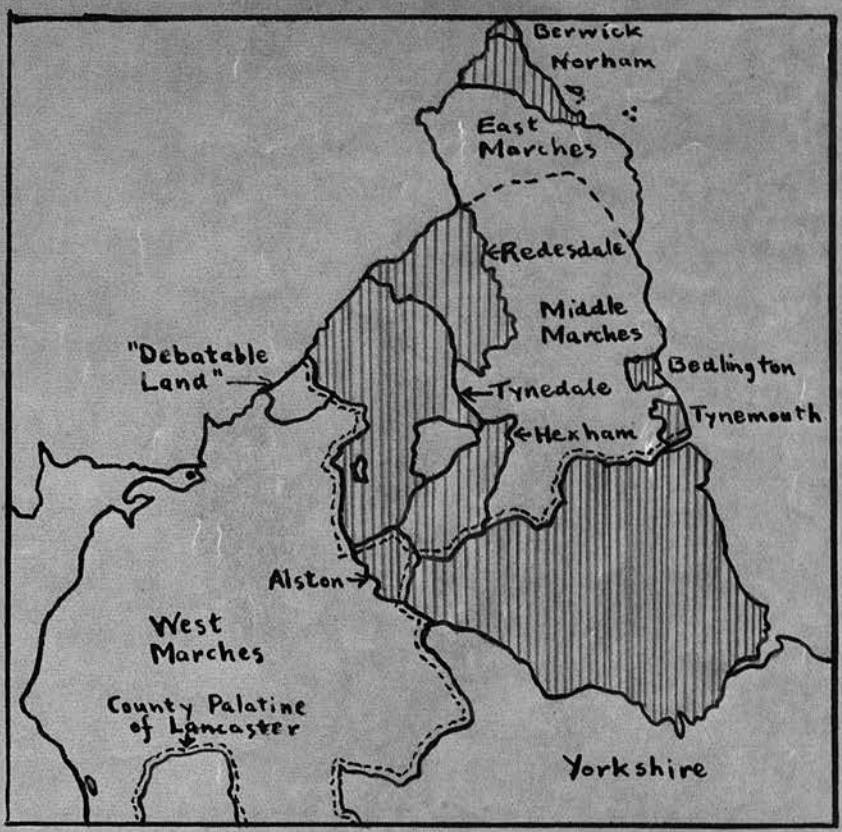

MAP 1
DIOCESE OF DURHAM c. 1535
PARISHES and their PATRONS
(See Key and Index in
Vol. 1, pp. xii–xv.)
Patrons
Bishop of Durham
Priory of Durham
Houses of Canons Regular
Other Ecclesiastical Patrons
Lay Patrons
19 Benefices which were abolished or lost their independence between 1311 and 1540

MAP 2



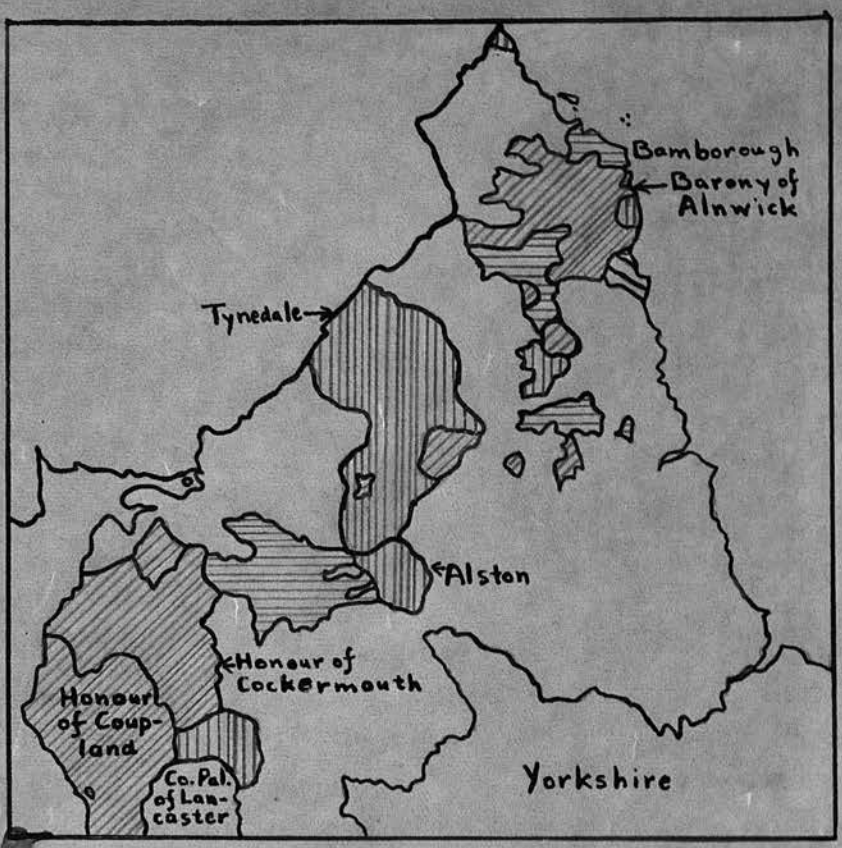
THE NORTHERN PALATINATES, 1525.

The Palatinates are shaded.

The line ---- divides the Marches as they stood in the 16th century. Before 1381 there were only two marches, the west including Cumberland and Westmorland, the east being Northumberland. In that year the Middle March was created out of Tynedale, Redesdale, Hexham and the parts of Northumberland west of the Newcastle-Roxburgh road.

(Reid, Council of the North, p. 26.)

MAP 3



1525

Lands held directly by the King :

Lands held as baronies, honours and palatinates by the King :

The estates of the Percies :

Lands held as baronies, honours and palatinates by other nobles, prelates and monastic houses :

MAP 4

PRINCIPAL ROADS AND CASTLES, 1525

Rivers shown by fainter lines